HOW JOB DEMANDS AND RESOURCES PREDICT BURNOUT, ENGAGEMENT AND INTENTION TO QUIT IN CALL CENTRES

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The industrial psychology literature related to call centres highlights the negative aspects of call centre work environments and the resultant adverse impact on workers' well-being. Call centres have been labelled the "coal mines of the 21st century", "assembly lines in the head" and "satanic mills" (Janse van Rensburg, Boonzaier, & Boonzaier, 2013, p. 2). High levels of stress, high staff turnover and burnout are all factors that are often experienced by call centre agents (Banks & Roodt, 2011).

However, Van der Colff and Rothman (2009) report that some call centre agents, regardless of the high job demands, do not develop burnout. These agents cope better than others under highly demanding and stressful work conditions. To build on these findings, the present study took a detailed look at factors affecting the well-being of employees working in call centres. Specifically, the question was asked, "Why is there variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit amongst the employees in call centres?"

The job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) was used as a framework to investigate the well-being of call centre agents employed in the outbound departments of two branches of a Cape Town call centre.

The primary objective of this study was to develop and empirically test a structural model, derived from theory, explaining the antecedents of variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit amongst call centre employees. The antecedents comprise transformational leadership (as a job resource), emotional intelligence and psychological capital (as employees' personal resources), and emotional labour (as job demands) present in a call centre environment.

An *ex post facto* correlational design was used to test the formulated hypotheses in this research study. Quantitative data was collected from 223 call centre agents by means of non-probability convenience sampling. A self-administered hard-copy survey was distributed to the two call centre branches, given that call centre agents agreed to participate in the research study. Measuring instruments consisted of (1) the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) questionnaire (Schaufeli et al., 2002), (2) the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS) (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001), (3) the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) (Ding & Lin, 2006; Lee, 2000), (4) the Emotional Demands and Emotion-rule Dissonance scales

(Xanthopoulou, Bakker, & Fischbach, 2013), (5) the adapted Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5x short) (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009), (6) the Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory (Gignac, 2010) and (7) the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). The data was analysed using item analyses and structural equation modelling (SEM). A PLS path analysis was conducted to determine the model fit.

From the 21 hypotheses formulated in the study, six were found to be significant. It is noteworthy, however, that 12 of the non-significant paths were related to the moderating effects. Hypotheses 1, 3 and 8 were also found to be not significant. However, hypotheses 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 were all found to be statistically significant and therefore supported the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014), which postulates that job demands are generally the most important predictors of job burnout, whereas job resources and personal resources are generally the most important predictors of work engagement. Also, it was found that call centre agents experiencing a high level of work engagement were less inclined to leave the organisation.

The study's findings shed light on the importance of developing interventions that can foster job and personal resources in the pursuit of optimising work engagement. In addition, the call centre agents can be bolstered in coping with existing job demands and cumulatively this also results in a decrease in the employees' level of burnout and in their intention to leave the company.

OPSOMMING

Bedryfsielkundige literatuur met betrekking tot inbelsentrums beklemtoon die negatiewe aspekte van die werkomgewing van inbelsentrums en die gevolglike nadelige effek op werkers se welsyn. Inbelsentrums is reeds beskryf as die "steenkoolmyne van die 21ste eeu", '"monteerbande in die kop" en "sataniese meule" (Janse van Rensburg, Boonzaier, & Boonzaier, 2013, p. 2). Hoë vlakke van stres, hoë personeelomset en uitbranding is faktore wat gereeld deur inbelsentrum-agente ervaar word (Banks & Roodt, 2011).

Van der Colff en Rothman (2009) rapporteer egter dat ten spyte van hulle hoë werkvereistes, sommige inbelsentrumagente nie uitbranding ervaar nie. Hierdie agente vaar beter as ander onder hoogs veeleisende en stresvolle werkomstandighede. Om verder te bou op die navorsing wat reeds onderneem is, kyk die huidige studie na die faktore wat moontlik die welsyn van werknemers in inbelsentrums affekteer. Met ander woorde, dit soek na die antwoord op die navorsingsinisiërende vraag: "Hoekom is daar verskille in die werksbegeestering, werksuitbranding en intensie om die organisasie te verlaat onder werknemers in inbelsentrums?"

Om op hierdie navorsingsinisiërende vraag te kan reageer, is die *job demands-resources* (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) gebruik as raamwerk spesifiek om die welsyn van inbelsentrumagente wat in die uitbel-departemente binne twee takke van 'n bekende uitbelsentrum, geleë in Kaapstad, te ondersoek.

Die hoofdoelwit van hierdie studie was om 'n strukturele model te ontwikkel en te toets wat die antesedente van variansie in werksbegeestering, werksuitbranding en die intensie om die organisaie te verlaat, onder inbelsentrumwerknemers verklaar. Die spesifieke antesedente wat in hierdie studie getoets is, was transformasie-leierskap (as 'n werkshulpbron), emosionele intelligensie en sielkundige kapitaal (*psychological capital)* (as werknemers se persoonlike hulpbronne), en emosionele arbeid (as werkseise) wat in 'n inbelsentrum-omgewing teenwoordig is.

'n *Ex post facto* korrelasie-ontwerp is gebruik om die geformuleerde hipoteses in hierdie studie te toets. Kwantitatiewe data is by 223 inbelsentrumagente deur middel van nie-waarskynlikheids gerieflikheidsteekproeftrekking ingesamel. 'n Selfgeadministreerde hardekopie-opname is in die twee takke van die inbelsentrum versprei, aangesien hulle

ingestem het om aan die studie deel te neem. Die opname het spesifieke latente veranderlikes gemeet wat op die studie van toepassing is deur gebruik te maak van betroubare en geldige meetinstrumente. Hierdie instrumente sluit in (1) die *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES-17) vraelys (Schaufeli et al., 2002), (2) die *Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey* (MBI-GS) (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001), (3) die *Turnover Intention Scale* (TIS) (Ding & Lin, 2006; Lee, 2000), (4) die *Emotional Demands* en *Emotion-rule Dissonance* skale (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, & Fischbach, 2013), (5) die aangepaste *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ 5x kort) (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009), (6) die *Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory* (Gignac, 2010) en (7) die *Psychological Capital Questionnaire* (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). Die versamelde data is deur middel van item-analise en strukturele vergelykingsmodellering geanaliseer. ’n PLS pad-ontleding is onderneem om modelpassing te bepaal.

Vanuit die 21 hipoteses wat vir hierdie studie geformuleer is, is ses bevind om betekenisvol te wees. Dit is egter merkwaardig dat 12 van die nie-betekenisvolle bane verband gehou het met modererende effekte. Hipoteses 1, 3 en 8 is ook bevind om nie-betekenisvol te wees. Hierdie nie-betekenisvolle bane kan op grond van verskeie redes ontstaan. Hipoteses 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 en 9 is egter almal bevind om statisties betekenisvol te wees en ondersteun dus die JD-R teorie (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Hierdie teorie hou voor dat werksvereistes oor die algemeen die belangrikste voorspellers van werksuitbranding is, terwyl werkshulpbronne en persoonlike hulpbronne oor die algemeen die vernaamste voorspellers van werksbegeestering is. Dit is ook bevind dat inbelsentrumagente wat ’n hoë vlak van werksbegeestering ervaar, minder geneig is om die organisasie te verlaat.

Die studie se bevindings werp lig op die belangrikheid daarvan om ingrypings te ontwikkel wat werks- en persoonlike hulpbronne kan kweek in die nastrewing van die optimering van begeestering en om inbelsentrumagente te help om die bestaande werkseise te hanteer. Gevolglik sal hierdie uitkoms lei tot ’n vermindering in die werknemers se vlakke van uitbranding en in hulle intensies om die organisasie te verlaat.

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To my brother, Niel. Thank you for always being just a phone call away and for keeping the smile on my face. Thank you for your sincerity, care and support. You are truly an inspiration to me.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION 1

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT 4

1.3 RESEARCH-INITIATING QUESTION 6

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY 6

1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVE 7

1.6 OUTLINE OF RESEARCH STUDY 8

1.7 DELIMITATION 8

CHAPTER 2 9

LITERATURE STUDY 9

2.1 INTRODUCTION 9

2.2 USING THE JOB DEMANDS-RESOURCES (JD-R) FRAMEWORK TO IDENTIFY ELICITING/CAUSAL FACTORS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT, JOB BURNOUT AND INTENTION TO QUIT 9

2.3 RELEVANT LATENT VARIABLES 13

2.3.1 Work engagement 13

2.3.2 Job burnout 17

2.3.3 Intention to quit 19

2.3.4 Emotional labour (i.e. emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands) as a critical job demand in call centres 21

2.3.5 Transformational leadership as a critical job resource in call centres 26

2.3.6 Emotional intelligence (EI) as a critical personal resource in call centres 31

2.3.7 Psychological capital as a critical personal resource in call centres 35

2.4 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LATENT VARIABLES 39

2.4.1 Job burnout and work engagement 39

2.4.2 Work engagement and intention to quit 40

2.4.3 Emotional labour (i.e. emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands) and job burnout 41

2.4.4 Transformational leadership and work engagement 44

2.4.5 Transformational leadership and emotional intelligence 46

2.4.6 Transformational leadership and psychological capital 47

2.4.7 Emotional intelligence and work engagement....49
2.4.8 Psychological capital and work engagement....50
2.5 MODERATING EFFECTS BETWEEN VARIABLES....51
2.5.1 The first interaction effect....51
2.5.2 The second interaction effect....53
2.6 THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL....55
2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY....55

CHAPTER 3....57
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY....57
3.1 INTRODUCTION....57
3.2 SUBSTANTIVE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES....58
3.3 THE STRUCTURAL MODEL....61
3.4 STATISTICAL HYPOTHESES....63
3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN....66
3.6 RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND SAMPLING SIZE....67
3.7 MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS....68
3.7.1 Biographical information....69
3.7.2 Utrecht Work Engagement Scale questionnaire (UWES-17)....71
3.7.3 Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS)....73
3.7.4 Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-5)....75
3.7.5 Emotional demands and emotion-rule dissonance scales....75
3.7.6 The adapted Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)....76
3.7.7 Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory....77
3.7.8 Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ)....78
3.8 MISSING VALUES....79
3.9 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS....80
3.9.1 Data analysis....80
3.9.2 Computer package....80
3.9.3 Item analysis....80
3.9.4 Structural equation modelling (SEM)....81
3.10 RESEARCH ETHICS....83
3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY....85

CHAPTER 4....86

RESULTS 86
4.1 INTRODUCTION 86
4.2 VALIDATING THE MEASUREMENT MODEL 86
4.2.1 Item analysis 86
4.3 PARTIAL LEAST SQUARE (PLS) ANALYSIS 91
4.3.1 Evaluation and interpretation of the measurement model 92
4.3.2 Evaluation and interpretation of the structural model 95
4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY 111
CHAPTER 5 113
IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 113
5.1 INTRODUCTION 113
5.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS 114
5.2.1 General implications for call centres 115
5.2.2 Implications aimed specifically at the results of the present study 116
5.3 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 129
5.4 DISCUSSION 132
5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY 133
REFERENCE LIST 135

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Major Contributions of Previous Job-stress Models 10
Table 3.1: Summary of Latent Variables 63
Table 3.2: Biographical Information of Sample Population (N = 223) 69
Table 3.3: Cronbach's alpha for UWES-scales for the Other Language Version 72
Table 4.1: Means, Standard Deviations and Internal Consistency Reliabilities of Subscales 87
Table 4.2: Means, Standard Deviations and Internal Consistency Reliabilities of Scales 88
Table 4.3: Reliability Statistics of the PLS Model 92
Table 4.4: Outer Loadings 94
Table 4.5: R Squares Scores for the Endogenous Variables 97
Table 4.6: Path Coefficients between Variables 98
Table 4.7: R^2 change and P-values for the Moderating Effects 103
Table 4.8: Moderating Path Coefficients 103

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1. The job demands-resources (JD-R) model 12
Figure 2.2. Conceptual model 56
Figure 3.1. Structural model 61

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Service is becoming an ever-larger part of developed economies, where service productivity is increasingly becoming the focus of attention. The management of service productivity requires concern about both efficiency (i.e. productivity) and effectiveness (i.e. service quality and customer satisfaction). In reality, better service productivity often involves a trade-off, with better service usually requiring more labour intensity, lower productivity and higher costs. There is a constant struggle with the trade-off between improved service to customers and cutting costs by using less expensive labour (Rust & Huang, 2012). Consequently, increasing productivity and customer satisfaction in the service sector often go hand in hand.

Because of the concern for efficiency and effectiveness, it is important for every organisation to have a competent workforce to survive in today's highly competitive industry. Radnor and McGuire (2004, as cited in Banks & Roodt, 2011) found that the role of managers in the service sector is often administrative rather than managerial. These managers focus on efficiency measures, rather than on managing the quality of the customer experience (i.e. the courtesy, friendliness and enthusiasm of the employees). Managers have to decide on practices that will meet the companies' expectations of rationalised operations whilst ensuring employee well-being and customer satisfaction (Banks & Roodt, 2011).

Many of these service jobs involve face-to-face or voice-to-voice interactions with customers, which include activities as diverse as selling financial products, answering queries about bank charges, serving clients in a restaurant and assisting clients with insurance claims (Janse van Rensburg, Boonzaier, & Boonzaier, 2013). All of these jobs require a high degree of personal contact with the public and the performance of what has been termed emotional labour. In every service industry, the employer expects the employee to display definite emotions that comply with certain norms or standards of the organisation, which are designed to create a desired "state of mind" in the customers (Buckner & Mahoney, 2012). In voice-to-voice service work, this has been characterised as "smiling down the phone" (Iverson, Walsh, & Deery, 2002). Erickson and Wharton (1997) argue that employees are expected to appear

friendly and happy and to appear pleased to serve the clients, despite of any private misgivings or any different feelings that they may have. The most important part of the service industry is the display of emotions, which are specified and required by the organisation (Rust & Huang, 2012).

Research has shown that customer reactions and organisational outcomes, mainly sales, are affected by how employees express their feelings (e.g. Bozionelos & Kiamou, 2008). When service agents display positive emotions, it directly affects displays of positive effect by the customers. These displays then have a positive effect on the customers' evaluations of the overall service quality (Ashkanasy, Härtel, & Daus, 2002). Consequently, positive emotional expression by service agents can have a favourable effect on customers' recovery, retention and satisfaction. To ensure that customers are satisfied with the service they receive, it is essential for the organisation to provide a competent, friendly and productive staff (Dean & Rainnie, 2009). This is especially critical for frontline employees, as they work face to face with the customers and are responsible for the customers' approval. Good service therefore can be seen as the competitive advantage that favours a firm relative to its competitors. For any organisation to provide good service, it is not only important to employ individuals with the required and necessary personal resources, but also to provide their employees with a favourable working environment in order to keep them satisfied and committed.

Within the service industry, *call centres* have become a very popular method of service delivery, mostly because of financial benefits to the organisations that make use of them (i.e. cost savings implications). Call centres eliminate the need for extensive and expensive branch networks with face-to-face service interaction. A large proportion of service work nowadays is done through call centres, which explains why the call centre environment consequently is one of the fastest-growing segments in the service sector, both in South Africa and internationally (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Employees in the South African call centre sector have increased from 50 000 in 2005 to 180 000 in 2010, and it is predicted that approximately 100 000 new jobs will be created in the country by 2015 (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Roughly half of these jobs are in the Western Cape, followed by Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (Planting, 2012).

However, even though the call centre industry is one of the fastest growing segments in the service sector, they face an exceptional problem that few call centres have been able to overcome. Call centres have one of the highest turnover rates of any industry. According to

Planting (2012), within the entire industry, call centres replace 30% of their front-line agents annually. A high turnover not only puts a strain on management to find competent workers, but it can cost a company thousands of rand to hire and train new employees all the time.

A call centre can be described as a work environment in which the main business is facilitated by telephone and computer-based technologies that allow the effective distribution of incoming and outgoing calls to available staff (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Call centres are furthermore characterised by routine tasks and a low level of control by the employees. It has been suggested that there is a high level of stress at work, both concerning work tasks and the interaction of employees with customers (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

There are different types of call centres, with the differentiating factors being whether calls are inbound or outbound[1], the degree of product complexity and variability, and the depth of knowledge required in dealing with the service interaction (Bain, Watson, Mulvey, Taylor, & Gall, 2002). Work in call centres is considered highly repetitive, with work timing paced by electronic performance-monitoring systems (Bain et al., 2002). Zapf, Isic, Bechtoldt and Blau (2003) state that the tension in call centre operations between, on the one hand, trying to achieve client satisfaction and, on the other hand, the emphasis on efficient operations (e.g. speedy and short telephone responses), can have a negative influence on employee satisfaction, commitment, well-being and performance. As with many service industries, call centres are also infused with the two logics explained earlier in the chapter: a need to be cost-efficient and a desire to be customer-orientated. Korczynski (2002, cited in Deery & Kinnie, 2002) purports that these twin objectives are fundamentally contradictory, as call centres seek to reduce costs per customer transaction by increasing the speed with which calls are processed. These tensions and contradictions are evident in the marketplace. Customers are seeking to obtain services that are adapted to their needs and requirements, yet at the same time these services should be efficient and inexpensive. An array of easily accessible measures offered by call centre technology enables efficiency (Korczynski, 2002, cited in

[1] An **inbound** call centre is where the customer makes the phone call, usually for customer service or support (Callaghan & Thompson, 2000; Kalleberg, 2000). Inbound call centres mainly respond to incoming calls and deal primarily with questions and complaints that customers may have. Clients' questions are frequently straightforward and simple, requiring standard answers, but sometimes clients have complex requests for help requiring non-standard answers (Bain *et al*., 2002). An **outbound** call centre is where the call centre employee contacts the customer, usually to do a sales pitch or to collect outstanding debt. They are mainly for contacts that are initiated by the organisation, and primarily for attempts to sell a product or service. (Bain *et al*., 2002). Bain *et al*. (2002) state that employees working in the outbound departments will most likely experience a higher level of emotional labour and strain, and hence the turnover rates of these outbound departments generally are higher than the turnover rates within the inbound departments.

Deery & Kinnie, 2002). These measures focus on call quantities and performance targets and offer data such as:

- the number of calls waiting
- the proportion of calls answered
- the average call duration
- the customer waiting time

Ultimately, it is evident that call centres should be more cost effective; however, lower employee well-being can in reality increase the total costs. Workman and Bommer (2004, cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006) support this notion by stating that employees' negative attitudes due to damaging experiences in the call centre environment result in reduced productivity, poor customer service, higher turnover and absenteeism and, ultimately, an adverse financial impact (cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006). Overall, one can conclude that the call centre environment is tough and worsening. Many demands and external factors affect the well-being and satisfaction of call centre agents. It therefore is critical for call centre managers to start addressing these problems and find solutions to keep the employees satisfied, as a high rate of employee contentedness is directly related to a lower turnover rate (Janse van Rensburg, Boonzaier, & Boonzaier, 2013).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The industrial psychology literature related to call centres highlights the negative aspects of call centre work environments and the resultant adverse impact on workers' well-being. Call centres have been labelled the "coal mines of the 21st century", "assembly lines in the head" and "satanic mills" (Janse van Rensburg, Boonzaier, & Boonzaier, 2013, p.2). High stress levels, high staff turnover and burnout all are factors that often are experienced by call centre agents (Banks & Roodt, 2011).

However, Van der Colff and Rothman (2009) have reported that some call centre agents, regardless of the high job demands, do not develop burnout. These agents cope better than others in highly demanding and stressful work conditions. The call centre agents who do not develop burnout find pleasure in tough work and in dealing with job demands. These employees thrive in demanding and stressful environments. Instead of experiencing

exhaustion, stress and burnout, they rather experience a sense of work engagement and no intentions to leave the organisation.

Burnout can be defined as a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by an individual's personal life. Call centre agents who burn out from their work will deplete their energetic resources and lose their dedication to work (Bakker et al., 2014). High levels of job demands are a greater predictor of burnout than the (lack of) job resources.

Call centres therefore need employees who are able to deal with high levels of job demands, who are psychologically connected[2] to their work, enthusiastic to invest themselves fully in their roles, and committed to high quality performance standards. They need employees who *engage* with their work (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006). In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance.

Engaged employees therefore put a great deal of effort into their work, as they identify with it. Kahn (1990) furthermore states that a dynamic relationship exists between the person who drives personal energies into his/her work role on the one hand, and the work role that allows this person to express him/herself on the other hand (Bakker et al., 2014). Research has revealed that engaged employees are highly energetic, self-efficacious individuals who exercise influence over events that affect their lives (Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008). Because of their positive attitude and activity level, engaged call centre agents will create their own positive feedback in terms of appreciation, recognition, and success. Although they do feel tired after a long day of hard work, they will experience their tiredness as a rather pleasant state because it is associated with positive accomplishments (Schaufeli et al., 2008). Unlike workaholics, engaged employees do not work hard because of a strong and irresistible inner drive, but because for them working is fun (Bakker, Albrecht, & Leiter, 2011). This contentment and satisfaction experienced is directly related to lower levels of employees' intention to quit the company (Janse van Rensburg, 2010).

Intention to quit is an intervening variable between job satisfaction and actual turnover and is therefore affected by similar individual and organisational factors. Employees' intention to

[2] Employees' psychological connection with their work has gained critical importance in the service economy of the 21st century. In order to compete effectively in the contemporary world of work, companies not only must recruit the top talent, but must also inspire and enable employees to apply their full capabilities to their work, thereby enhancing the psychological connection between the employee and their work.

leave the organisation is an expression of actual turnover indicated that intentions to quit act as a predictor to the action of real turnover. Call centre agents will intend to quit their jobs at some point in time when they feel that the organisation they are working for does not fulfil their needs anymore (Xin Yi, 2012).

Evidently, it is critical for call centre managers to determine the key to employee satisfaction and define the factors that are keeping the employees fulfilled and engaged and preventing them from leaving the organisation. These factors need to be addressed in order to decrease employees' level of burnout and increase their level of engagement. Such positive changes most likely will lead to a decrease in the employees' intention to quit and eventually to a decrease in the overall turnover rates within call centres.

1.3 RESEARCH-INITIATING QUESTION

The question therefore can be asked; "Why do some employees burn out or get bored easily by their work, whereas others are so enthusiastic and engaged in their work that times seems to fly?" The question of what causes job burnout and what motivates people has received a lot of research attention over the past five decades (e.g. Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Hulsheger, Lang, & Maier, 2010; Kinman, 2009). To build on this research, the present study will look at the factors that might affect the wellbeing of employees working in call centres. In other words, the study will determine what specifically influences the call centre agents' work engagement, job burnout and intention to leave the company.

The research-initiating question for the study reads as follows:

"Why is there variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit amongst the employees in call centres?"

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The challenge for call centre management therefore is to attempt to remove and manage the factors that are causing stress before they manifest as burnout. As a result, call centre management must equip the employees with the necessary tools and skills to handle/control the high demands with which they are faced in the call centre environment on a daily basis. If these issues are not attended to, they can result in a variety of negative consequences, including increased absence and turnover rates; increased staffing, recruitment and training costs; decreased quality of customer service; increased errors; as well as employee dissatisfaction (Holman, 2003, cited in Hauptfleisch & Uys, 2006).

Consequently, it can be argued that whether employees will survive in the call centre environment is dependent on the existing (or lack of) job resources and personal resources and the level of job demands in the organisation. In order to answer the research-initiating question, a comprehensive model that can be utilised in the present study specifically to investigate the well-being of call centre agents is the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). This model has been applied to various occupational settings in order to determine how job and personal resources, as well as job demands, interact to affect work engagement and job burnout.

According to the JD-R theory, the job demands and resources are the triggers of two independent processes, namely a health impairment process and a motivational process. Thus, whereas job demands are generally the most important predictors of outcomes such as exhaustion, psychosomatic health complaints and repetitive strain injury, job resources are generally the most important predictors of work enjoyment, motivation and work engagement.[3] Consequently, the JD-R model will be used to better understand, explain and make predictions about the variance in employees' levels of work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit the call centre environment.

1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this study was to develop and empirically test a structural model (based on current literature) that explains the antecedents of variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit amongst call centre employees (based on the JD-R model).

The research study aimed to:

- Identify the most salient antecedents of variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit among call centre agents;
- As a consequence, propose and test an explanatory engagement, burnout and intention to quit structural model; and
- Highlight the results and managerial implications of the research findings and recommend practical interventions to the call centres that could increase work engagement and decrease the level of burnout and intention to quit amongst call centre agents.

[3] The reasons for these unique effects are that job demands cost effort and consume energetic resources, whereas job resources fulfil basic psychological needs, such as the need for autonomy, relatedness and competence.

1.6 OUTLINE OF RESEARCH STUDY

Chapter 2 comprises an in-depth literature review to satisfy the theoretical objective of the study. Each of the latent variables of interest is defined, explained and discussed in terms of the existing academic literature. The relationships between these variables of interest are explored, and a theoretical model is developed to graphically portray the theorised relationships. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology that was used to empirically test the structural model that was developed via the literature study presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 4 reports on the results of the various statistical analyses performed. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, discusses the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future research, as well as discusses practical managerial implications conditional on the research findings.

1.7 DELIMITATION

The researcher aimed to determine the prominent antecedents of work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit in call centres based on a literature review. Data was thereafter gathered on call centre agents within two separate call centre branches of the same company. The JD-R model was used as framework for how job and personal resources, as well as job demands, have a significant effect on work engagement, job burnout and, ultimately, on the employees' intention to quit. Hypotheses related to the model were tested. The construct job crafting, which forms part of the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) was not included in this study. Attention was not paid to the sub-components of the constructs or hypotheses related to the sub-components. For example, although work engagement consists of three sub-dimensions, namely vigour, dedication and absorption, no individual hypotheses were stated that would test the relationship between the sub-dimensions and, for example, intention to quit. The reason for this is that the focus was not on hypotheses related to sub-components of the constructs in the JD-R model, but rather on the constructs as a whole and how they relate to each other. No effort was made to improve the psychometric properties of the measures utilised, for example manipulating the dataset using factor analyses, item deletion or attendant strategies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review starts with an overview of the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, after which the different constructs of the JD-R model that are relevant to the present study are defined and explained theoretically. An explanation of the relationships between the JD-R model's constructs will then follow, after which the hypotheses will be stated. Lastly, the two interacting/moderating effects within the JD-R model will be examined and explained. The chapter is concluded with a diagram of an elaborated version of the JD-R model.

The literature study therefore will focus on a literature review of past studies done by other researchers to provide the foundational background and basis for the research project. It lays out the theories supporting the research project and serves as guideline for the development of the theoretical framework and hypotheses.

2.2 USING THE JOB DEMANDS-RESOURCES (JD-R) FRAMEWORK TO IDENTIFY ELICITING/CAUSAL FACTORS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT, JOB BURNOUT AND INTENTION TO QUIT

During the past decade, the number of studies using the job demands-resources (JD-R) model (e.g. Bakker, 2011; Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2003; Bakker et al., 2004) has increased steadily. Because of the many studies, new propositions and meta-analyses done on the JD-R model, the model matured into a theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). With this JD-R theory it is possible to understand, explain and make predictions about employee well-being (e.g. burnout, motivation, work engagement, health) and job performance.

The JD-R model takes into account various assumptions form other occupational health stress models that previously were used to evaluate the impacts of job stressors and job characteristics on employee health and well-being. These models include (1) the Demand-Control Model (Karasek, 1979), (2) the Effort-Reward Imbalance Model (Siegrist, 1996), (3) the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), and (4) the Conservation of Resources Model (Hobfoll, as cited in Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). The central assumption of these models is that job strain develops as job demands exceed the coping resources needed to effectively deal with job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). These four models

have each contributed in a unique way to the development of the JD-R model. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2008), these models were valuable in developing a foundation for the explanation of work-related health impairment and well-being. Table 2.1 summarises the unique contribution of each model mentioned.

Table 2.1

Major Contributions of Previous Job-stress Models

Model	Contribution to the JD-R model
Demands-Control Model	Job strain develops when demands exceed job control
Effort-Rewards Imbalance Model	Inclusion of a personal component in stress models
Job Characteristics Model	Job characteristics are characterised as job demands or resources
Conservation of Resources Model	Develops the idea of resource caravans

The restricted and oversimplified nature of some of the models limited their theoretical progress and practical usefulness. This was further problematised by the fact that some models could only be applied practically to specific work contexts and jobs. This is especially true of the Demands-Control Model and the Effort-Rewards Imbalance Model, which are considered by many to be out-dated in the modern work environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). However, the theoretical basis of these models and their associated weaknesses provided a platform for the development of a new model, namely the JD-R model.

The newly adjusted JD-R model developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2014) was used in the present study as a guiding framework to examine why there is variance in call centre agents' engagement, job burnout and intention to quit. The model forms a predominant taxonomy that can be utilised to group job demands and resources into one model. Its flexibility allows for its application to any occupation or job position, irrespective of its nature or industry (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). The basic structure of the JD-R model is constant even when applied in different national and international contexts. A number of studies have supported

these aspects of the model, showing that job demands and resources can be linked to a range of other outcomes through burnout and work engagement (Hansez & Chmiel, 2010).

According to Demerouti and Bakker (2011), the JD-R model is an overarching model that combines the positive and negative outcomes of employee health and well-being into one comprehensive model. The model therefore not only integrates various previous models related to these outcomes, but also gives detail on how employees' working environments will affect their health and commitment to the organisation through two independent processes. It is implicit that job resources, together with personal resources, and job demands will give rise to two different but related processes. First is the *motivational process*, in which job resources play both an intrinsic and extrinsic motivational role as they fuel the employees' motivation to raise engagement, work enjoyment, motivation and organisational commitment. These positive outcomes have been found to be negatively related to employees' turnover intentions (Bakker et al., 2014). The second process, the *health impairment process*, on the other hand, involves a de-energising process, in which high demands reduce the employees' mental and physical resources, leading to job burnout and health impairments (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Job demands therefore will be the most important predictors of outcomes such as exhaustion, psychosomatic health complaints and repetitive strain injury (Bakker et al., 2014). Bakker et al. (2014) furthermore state that these negative outcomes are related rather to *sickness absence* and not to employees' *turnover intentions*, which are more a function of motivational processes. From these findings, the researcher established a path between employees' engagement and their intention to leave the organisation, coinciding with the motivational process (as opposed to the health impairment/stress process) explained by Bakker et al. (2014).

Even though job demands and job resources initiate different processes, Bakker et al. (2014) state that they also have combined effects, as there are two possible ways in which demands and resources can have a joint effect on the individual's well-being and directly influence performance. *The first interaction* is described as one in which job resources buffer the effect of job demands on strain. Research had shown that job resources therefore can lessen the impact of job demands on strain, including burnout, as employees who have many existing job resources will be able to cope better with their daily job demands. The *second interaction* described by Bakker et al. (2014) is one in which demands strengthen the impact of job resources on motivation/engagement. Accordingly, research has shown that job resources

become significant and have the strongest positive impact on work engagement when job demands are high. Above all, when an employee is confronted with challenging job demands, job resources will become valuable and foster dedication to the tasks at hand (Bakker et al., 2014).

Taking into account the empirical evidence in support of the JD-R model, the latest model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) (Figure 2.1) could reflect the work experience of call centre agents. If employees have sufficient personal and job resources at their disposal, it will have major implications for the functioning of organisations. If resources are in place it will not only stop burnout and emotional exhaustion, but enhance job satisfaction and work engagement and reduce burnout symptoms, which may result in increased financial return on investment. The resultant satisfaction and work engagement experienced by the employees therefore will not only lead to better productivity and service quality, but also to a decrease in the employees' turnover intentions and the overall turnover rate of the company.

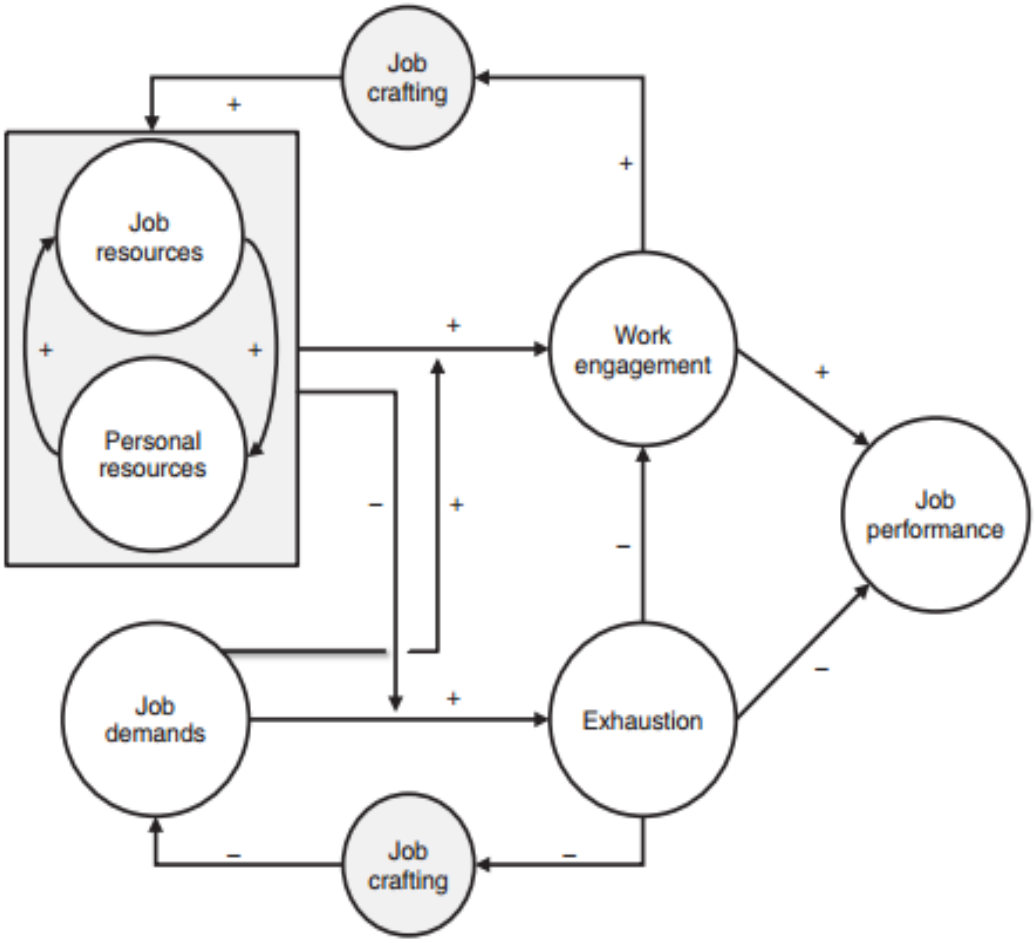

Figure 2.1. **The job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014)**

The responsibilities of human resource management therefore are to equip employees with the necessary job resources and personal resources. This is crucial, since a lack of resources can result in devastating negative effects on the company. Moreover, providing sufficient resources from a managerial perspective will result in employees being more resistant to job burnout symptoms and experiencing higher degrees of work engagement and lower levels of intention to leave the company.

The dependent variables and the relevant antecedents of call centre agents' work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit according to the JD-R model will now be discussed in detail.

2.3 RELEVANT LATENT VARIABLES

2.3.1 Work engagement

Employees' psychological connection with their work has gained critical importance in today's service economy. In the modern world of work, companies must not only recruit the top talent to compete effectively, but also must encourage and allow employees to apply their full capabilities and abilities to their work. Modern organisations need employees who are psychologically connected to their work, who are enthusiastic and talented to invest themselves fully in their roles, as well as employees who are proactive and committed to high-quality performance standards (Hakanen et al., 2006).

There has been so much research done on work engagement through the years, but it still is a contested issue whether it is unique or whether it is like "old wine in a new bottle". Consequently, there are different definitions by different scholars in terms of work engagement. Kahn (1990, p. 694) was the first to define work engagement – as the "harnessing of organisation member's selves to their work roles: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally and mentally during role performances".

The theory of work engagement arose from burnout research, namely as an effort to cover the whole spectrum from employee *unwell*-being (burnout) to employee *well*-being (Maslach et al., 2001). Unlike individuals who suffer from burnout, engaged employees have a sense of energetic and effective connection with their work activities and see themselves as able to deal well with the demands of their job.

Several definitions of engagement have been developed over the last couple of years. Schaufeli and Bakker (as cited in Bakker, 2011, p. 265) define work engagement as "[a]n active, positive work-related state that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption".

This definition is considered the most popular. The sub-components of work engagement can be explained as follows:

a) Vigour

Vigour refers to employees who have high levels of energy and resilience. It is the enthusiasm to invest effort in one's job, to be persistent while facing difficulties, and not to be exhausted easily (e.g. "At my job I feel strong and vigorous") (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

b) Dedication

Dedication refers to employees who are strongly involved in their work. They are enthusiastic, inspired and proud of what they have accomplished in their work (e.g. "I am enthusiastic about my work") (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

c) Absorption

Absorption refers to a pleasant state of total immersion in one's work, which is characterised by time passing quickly and being unable to detach oneself from the job. The employees are fully concentrated on their work tasks (e.g. "I get carried away by my work") (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Absorption comes close to what has been called flow[4] – a state of optimal experience.

However, the latest research done by De Bruin, Hill, Henn and Muller (2013) found that work engagement should be treated as a unidimensional construct. Therefore, individual scores should be interpreted in a summative manner, giving a single global score of work engagement.

Schaufeli, Taris, Le Blanc, Peeters, Bakker and De Jonge (2001) found that employees who scored high on vigour, dedication and absorption cannot be described as being addicted to work. Unlike workaholics, these engaged employees love doing activities outside of work. They do not feel guilty and ashamed when they are not working, and they do not work hard

[4] *Flow* refers to short-term peak experiences instead of a more persistent state of mind, as is the case with absorption.

because of a strong and desirable inner drive, but because they really enjoy their work. Engaged workers therefore can be described as active agents who believe in themselves, generate their own positive feedback and have values that match the organisation's needs. They do sometimes feel tired, but still satisfied and fulfilled in their work (Schaufeli et al., 2008). Engaged employees support their own engagement through a process called job crafting.

Job crafting can be defined as self-initiated change behaviours that employees engage in with the aim to align their jobs with their own likings, passion and motives (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012). Job crafting can take a number of forms. Firstly, it is possible for employees to change the aspects of their jobs that are task-related. This includes the number of tasks they have or the content of these specific tasks (Tims et al., 2012). Secondly, employees are able to change aspects of their jobs, which include the relationships they have with their co-workers and supervisors. Lastly, employees are able to change the perception that they have about aspects of their jobs with the aim to increase the meaning of their work (Tims et al., 2012).

Job crafting therefore can be described as changing the boundaries and conditions of job tasks and job relationships and the meaning of the job (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Hence, job crafting influences how tasks are conceptualised and carried out (task crafting), how frequently and with whom employees interact at work (relational crafting), and how employees cognitively ascribe significance and meaning to their jobs (meaningfulness crafting) (Tims & Bakker, 2010). It furthermore can be defined as a form of proactive behaviour through which employees actively attempt to personalise and improve their jobs by changing the nature of job demands and/or resources in the work setting (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Job crafting has been found to have significant positive relationships with work engagement, employability, job performance, job satisfaction, resilience and thriving.

Then again, work engagement overlaps with constructs such as job involvement, job satisfaction and job commitment. While the attitudinal component of work engagement overlaps with these constructs, work engagement is distinct, as it also comprises a component that reflects high self-involvement. Consequently, as work engagement reflects high degrees of motivation, the performance of an employee is higher when his/her engagement is higher (Bledow, Schmitt, Frese, & Kuhnel, 2011).

Many studies have confirmed that work engagement and the performance of employees, as well as the performance of the organisation, are directly linked to each other. Rich, Lepine and Crawford (2010, p. 620) define job performance as "[t]he aggregated value to an organisation of the set of behaviours that an employee contributes both directly and indirectly to organisational goals".

There are many reasons why employees who are engaged in their work experience a higher performance rate and are more productive than others. Primarily, they often experience positive emotions such as happiness, joy and enthusiasm and transfer their engagement to others (Hakanen et al., 2006). Engaged employees automatically are more sensitive to opportunities at work and more helpful to others. According to Fredrickson's (2004) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, certain positive emotions all share the capacity to broaden people's momentary thought through widening the array of thoughts and actions that come to mind.

Secondly, engagement is also positively related to good health. According to Schaufeli et al. (2002), engaged employees report less psychosomatic complaints than non-engaged employees do. A negative correlation has been found between engagement (mainly vigour) and psychosomatic health complaints (e.g. chest pain, headaches) (Demerouti, Bakker, De Jonge, Jansen, & Schaufeli, 2001). Vigour is also positively related to physical and mental health (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Furthermore, the reason why engaged employees are more productive may be their ability to create their own resources. Frederickson's (2004) broaden-and-build theory makes it clear that momentary experiences of positive emotions can build enduring psychological resources and activate upward spirals toward emotional well-being.

Lastly, work engagement can be seen as a mediator in the motivation process. Research on the potential consequences suggests that work engagement may play a mediating role between job resources on the one hand, and positive work behaviours and attitudes on the other (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Looking mostly at the positive side of engagement, employees who are engaged in their work perform better than unengaged employees because of their remarkable characteristics. Engaged employees are proactive, positive and take initiative. Because they enjoy their work, they are intrinsically motivated, feel more competent, set higher goals and show more pre-

social behaviour (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Any organisation's aspiration is to appoint engaged employees because absenteeism in the workplace will be less of a problem and, due to this, the performance rate will start increasing (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Research also indicates that financial returns in the service sector are much higher on days when employees reported to be experiencing higher levels of work engagement (Bledow et al., 2011). It therefore is clear that these engaged employees are present, motivated and pay off through their performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Work engagement has become an important concept for organisations as employers have realised that they need not only healthy employees, but also a motivated and engaged workforce (Saks, 2006). It therefore can be concluded that employees' level of work engagement is a desirable objective that call centre management should aspire to and aim for their employees to experience on a day-to-day basis. Work engagement not only shows positive financial returns, but also enhances the well-being of employees and will decrease the employees' intention to leave an organisation (Leiter & Bakker, 2010).

2.3.2 Job burnout

Introduced in the mid-1970s, the burnout construct has received growing attention from researchers across the world (e.g. Bakker et al., 2004; Hakanen et al., 2006; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Burnout can be described as a chronic affective response syndrome, a type of stress that develops in response to stressful working conditions (Prins et al., 2010). It does not develop overnight. When people experience burnout they usually experience a gradual sense of loss that develops over an extended period of time. With the onset of burnout, an engaged, positive and energetic relationship with one's work progressively turns into disengagement, a loss of energy, limited commitment and a sense of ineffectiveness, which, over time, becomes real in the form of reduced accomplishment (Maslach & Leiter, 1999). Job burnout can be identified through poor employee well-being, bad health, negative attitude, bad behaviour and performance, substance abuse, depression and psychological distress (Alarcon, Eschleman & Bowling, 2009).

The most accepted definition of the condition describes burnout as consisting of three separate but interrelated constructs, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). The first of these constructs, *emotional exhaustion*, is thought to be the most important, and is the first response that develops. It is characterised by feelings of emotional depletion, extreme tiredness, a lack of

energy and a feeling of being drained of emotional resources to cope with continuing demands (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009). When employees reach this point of extreme tiredness, they act to conserve their levels of energy (Deery, Iverson, & Walsh, 2002). To regulate their energy resources, employees reduce their emotional and cognitive involvement with the work; in other words, they withdraw from their work.

This leads to the second component of burnout, namely *depersonalisation* (Maslach et al., 2001). Depersonalisation can be seen as a coping response that will protect the employee from further emotional depletion. This form of coping has serious implications for a company that makes use of service workers to provide their services. When service employees use depersonalisation as a form of coping in response to high levels of emotional exhaustion, they tend to be less responsive to, and involved with, the needs of their customers. Depersonalisation furthermore can be characterised by an uncaring response towards people encountered at work and/or by an effort to deal with work stress by separating oneself from others (Alarcon et al., 2009).

In the final phase of burnout, which is regarded as reduced *personal accomplishment*, employees compare their current levels of competence with their previous levels of competence before emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation set in. In this self-evaluation, they see that they are not as competent and efficient as they used to be, and feelings of incompetence, low self-esteem, lack of achievement and lower productivity follow (Alarcon et al., 2009; Sawyerr, Srinivas & Wang, 2009). This can be explained as employees believing that they cannot perform their job effectively and adequately, or that they will fail in meeting their work-related goals (Alarcon et al., 2009).

Traditionally, burnout has been seen as an individual weakness, without consideration for the role of the work environment in developing burnout. According to Maslach et al. (2001), this reasoning is flawed in that it only looks at the individual and not at the individual within the working context. Research on burnout indicates that the environment in which individuals find themselves, specifically the characteristics of the work environment, are related more to burnout than to personal and/or personality factors (Maslach et al., 2001). This point of view is especially relevant to the stressful working environment of call centres.

In general, it has become evident that call centres are not seen as particularly pleasant workplaces. They have been given many different names, such as “electronic sweatshops”,

"dark satanic mills" and "assembly lines in the head" (Janse van Rensburg, Boonzaier, & Boonzaier, 2013, p.2). Concern therefore has been expressed about the possible negative effects of call centre work (i.e. emotional labour and strain experienced) on the psychological well-being of employees. Although a call centre work environment may be naturally stressful and, as a result, more likely to lead to employee burnout, there is research that indicates that not all people who work in such environments are vulnerable to burnout (Timms, Brough, & Graham, 2012).

There thus are a number of factors associated with job demands, which altogether will have a negative effect on job burnout. Job burnout can be the result of job demands that are too high, as well as a lack of satisfactory personal and job resources, or a combination of the two. Therefore, job burnout can be caused by environmental as well as individual factors (Hudek-Knezevic, Kalebic, & Krapic, 2011). Amongst the most important of these factors are workload, role overload, work pressure and role conflict (Deery et al., 2002). High workload, in particular, has consistently been linked to emotional exhaustion in a range of studies (Jackson, Schwab & Schuller, 1986). Role overload occurs when individuals feel that they lack the training and skills to deal adequately with the requirements of the job. Furthermore, role conflict can be defined as the extent to which incompatible expectations are communicated to the employees and are identified widely as a determinant of emotional exhaustion (Deery et al., 2002).

Consequently, it is of great importance for managers to realise that they have to provide conditions and support mechanisms to call centre agents in order to ensure they can counter the effects of job burnout. As mentioned, the stressful environment in which these call centre agents perform their duties is a highly susceptible environment for symptoms of job burnout. In the call centre industry it is difficult, or almost impossible, to adjust the working environment to be less stressful and less demanding on employees. Therefore, it is crucial to provide sufficient job resources to employees to boost their morale and self-confidence and to help prevent them from experiencing job burnout.

2.3.3 Intention to quit

The actual turnover of a company refers to individuals actually ending their employment with their organisation, whereas intention to quit can be described as a conscious and deliberate consideration by an employee to leave his/her organisation (Saungweme & Gwandure, 2011). Intention to quit can be regarded as the psychological process that an employee experiences

when he/she is considering to leave the organisation and bears in mind other employment options due to the dissatisfaction he/she is facing in the organisation. It is the power of an employee's belief whether he/she will either stay with the organisation or leave the organisation in which he/she is currently employed (Saungweme & Gwandure, 2011).

The challenges that are largely related to turnover in organisations are that these companies put a lot of money and resources into training and developing newly appointed employees to provide them with the necessary skills to accomplish their jobs. Turnover will then result in the company losing the skills and knowledge gained by the employees who are leaving the company and consequently the company has to recruit and train new employees (Diamond, 2010). It is obvious that if the employees do not stay in the company long enough, the company will fail to gain a return on investment (ROI) from the employees leaving the organisation. Accordingly, retaining employees is crucial to the well-being and performance of an organisation (Diamond, 2010).

Intention to quit is followed by a number of decisions that an employee would make before deciding to quit. The thought process is triggered by the low level of satisfaction and engagement that an individual experiences within the workplace. Carrim, Basson and Coetzee (2006) state that this thought process includes thoughts of quitting, leading to an evaluation of the expected utility of search, intention to search, search, evaluation of alternatives, intention to quit, and finally the withdrawal decision and behaviour.

Intention to quit can be affected by either internal or external attitudes and it is important to identify the antecedent factors of intention to quit to understand and consequently to control this turnover behaviour (Diamond, 2010). Some of the literature on turnover intentions puts forward that conditions of employment are significant causes of the employees' intention to leave (Diamond, 2010). Empirical work has recognised the role of variables such as job satisfaction, perceptions of control, job stress, work engagement, commitment and supervisor support in predicting turnover intentions and turnover behaviours (Diamond, 2010; Saungweme & Gwandure, 2011).

With resources available to all members of the same organisation, not all members will experience the same level of work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit in call centres. Consequently, other factors come into play when exploring the above three variables. In order to gain a better understanding of what constitutes these variables in call centres, the

focus should be on the job demands and resources that are present in call centres. The job demands-resources model (JD-R model) presents such a framework and specifies how health impairment and motivation or involvement in any organisation may be produced by two specific sets of working conditions: *demands and resources.*

2.3.4 Emotional labour (i.e. emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands) as a critical job demand in call centres

Job demands are aspects of the job that require sustained emotional, cognitive and physical effort and therefore are predicted to be related to physiological and psychological costs. Job demands should not necessarily be viewed as negative, but can turn into barriers when there are not sufficient resources to meet them. Examples of job demands are work overload, time constraints, mental demands, job insecurity, and emotional demands (Bakker, 2011). Three scenarios surrounding job demands will now be presented and discussed.

Firstly, job demands can *exceed* resources (including job and personal resources). This occurs when employees' job demands are high and the resources necessary to deal adequately with job demands are not available. Obviously, when job demands exceed resources it can also be the result of the combination of decreased job and personal resources. It is usually within this scenario that job demands cause job strain and related physiological and/or psychological costs, such as ill health, burnout, work stress, absenteeism and exhaustion (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli et al., 2008). These negative outcomes develop due to the sustained physical and/or psychological effort exerted in attempts to meet job demands (Bakker, 2011).

A second scenario is where job demands *meet* job resources. This scenario occurs when adequate resources are available to deal with high demands. Bakker (2011) states that job resources gain salience when job demands are high. This implies that employees only truly utilise their available resources when job demands are high.

Thirdly, job resources can *exceed* job demands. This scenario is as unfavourable as when job demands exceed resources. Without any job demands, work has the potential of becoming boring, dull and unchallenging (Bakker, 2011). Employees might feel that they do not contribute to a bigger meaningful whole, their efforts are minimal, and that others can cope without them.

In conclusion, any job needs a comparable amount of demands and resources to keep employees focused and engaged to achieve optimal results. The moderating effect of job

demands consequently plays an essential role in determining the relationships between resources and engagement. The job demands in this study are measured by the level of *emotional labour* experienced within the call centre industry. Research has shown that the work of all call centre employees can be very stressful with respect to various aspects and involves a process called emotional labour. Call centres include high work pressure, role overload, emotional demands and poor environmental conditions, which all are related to job demands. Emotional labour therefore can be classified as a job demand within a call centre, as it represent features of the job that potentially suggest strain in cases where they outdo the employee's adaptive capability.

A common perception regarding call centre work is that managing phone-based customer actions and reactions all day is neither complicated nor demanding, as most interactions are simple, basic and scripted (Holman, 2003). However, as explained earlier, research has shown that the work of all call centre employees can be very stressful with respect to various aspects. There are several multi-task duties that call centre employees have to perform – tasks that involve controlling the calls by using sophisticated listening and questioning skills. The employees must also be able to input data into the system, read detailed information from a visual unit and converse with customers. Many customers are subjected to long waiting periods, which could lead to frustration and impatience because of call flooding. According to Wegge, Van Dick, Fisher, Wecking and Moltzen (2006), call centre employees sometimes communicate with approximately one hundred customers during an eight-hour shift. Attitude needs to be considered when speaking to customers and waiting customers almost simultaneously. Successful call centre agents will show characteristics such as friendliness, enthusiasm and being helpful to even difficult customers. This points to further demands with respect to the presentation of emotions in opposition to those being felt, which means patience is a very critical characteristic (Wegge et al., 2006).

Emotional labour therefore can be defined as the performance of various forms of emotional work in the context of paid employment, as well as the management of feelings to create publicly observable facial and bodily display that are subject to control and supervision (Pugliesi, 1999). According to Hochschild (1983), jobs that involve controlled displays of emotion consist of three characteristics:

a) voice or facial contact with the public;
b) the worker is required to produce an emotional state or reaction in the customer; and

c) the employer is provided with an opportunity to control the emotional activities of the employee.

Emotional labour therefore refers to the managed and more instrumental expression of emotions in the workplace. It involves the separation between emotions displayed and emotions that are felt internally (Wharton, 1999) and can therefore be summarised as labour which includes the display of emotions.

Groth, Henning-Thurau and Walsh (2009, p. 960) describe emotional labour as "the process of regulating both feelings and expressions for the organisational goals that need to be achieved. It is therefore clear that emotional labour includes the employees' total bodily display".

As soon as the client notices that the employee's facial expression, tone of voice and bodily display are not the same, the client will accept the behaviour as being self-doubting or fake (Groth et al., 2009). This also includes call centre employees who over-emphasise the feigning of their emotions, such as being overly friendly or too kind, which will result in customers perceiving their behaviour as insincere. Customers therefore bring about other tension in the work environment. Clients may be irritating and rude and their demands may be unreasonable. In order for the employees to protect themselves against such ill-treatment, they have to suppress their true feelings and detach themselves emotionally from hostile or difficult customers (Deery et al., 2002). Individuals with certain personality types and personal resources find it easier to display the bodily and emotional image that is required, whereas individuals with less personal resources find it more difficult and challenging (Groth et al., 2009).

Emotional labour involves mainly two dimensions, namely surface acting and deep acting. *Surface acting* involves faking the required emotions that are not actually felt (which is accomplished by careful presentation of verbal and nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, gesture and voice tone), while possibly also suppressing real and less suitable feelings (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Austin, Dore & O'Donovan, 2008). *Deep acting*, on the other hand, involves the individual managing and modifying his/her emotions in order to produce the required ones (Austin et al., 2008). Consequently, deep acting results in genuine emotional displays of the required emotions (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). Both surface acting and deep acting consist of effortful processes. However, it has been argued that the genuine nature of the attempt to feel the suitable emotion that underlies deep acting also

allows positive outcomes, such as feelings of achievement and accomplishment, and improves identification with the work role (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). As the cognitive dissonance experienced with deep acting will be less than with surface acting, deep acting results in less burned-out employees (Bozionelos & Kiamou, 2008). It therefore is important to realise that emotional labour is not automatically linked to negative mental health outcomes, as it can also be linked to positive outcomes, depending on the dimensions of emotional labour used by individuals.

Three additional dimensions of emotion work above and beyond surface acting and deep acting have been identified. These are (1) the *frequency* of emotional display, (2) the *intensity* of displayed emotion, and (3) the *variety* of displayed emotions (Bozionelos & Kiamou, 2008). Frequency, intensity and variety are viewed as the secondary dimensions of emotion work, described as emotion-related role requirements, whereas surface and deep acting are seen as the primary dimensions. These three secondary dimensions of emotional labour are defined inconsistently and also were recognised more recently than the identification of surface and deep acting. It thus is reasonable to expect that these three dimensions tolerate weaker and less consistent relationships with correlates and outcomes of emotional labour (Bozionelos & Kiamou, 2008).

Apart from deep and surface acting, *emotional dissonance* is another important facet of emotional labour. Emotional dissonance can be described as the discrepancy between felt emotions and emotions that are expressed to meet the organisational display rules (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). Emotional dissonance involves three different aspects, namely emotions required by display rules, expressed emotions, and felt emotions. Researchers have used different combinations of these three aspects to conceptualise and measure emotional dissonance (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). Hochschild (1983) argues that emotional dissonance is most harmful when it comes at the cost of the self – when it starts creating feelings of inauthenticity. On the other hand, Hochschild (1983) states that emotional dissonance is less harmful and problematic when it is attributed to the work role – when the acting is not attributed to the desire of the self, but rather to the demands of the job.

Although different points of view exist regarding the conceptualisation of emotional dissonance, the majority of research assesses emotional dissonance as *emotion-rule dissonance* (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). This is in line with previous and current theoretical models of emotional labour that define surface acting as an antecedent of emotional

dissonance. Emotion-rule dissonance is some kind of person-role conflict stemming from the incongruence between emotions that are truly felt and the emotions required by display rules, which will then result in an unpleasant state of tension (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). Xanthopoulou et al. (2013, p. 74) describe emotional-rule dissonance as "the conflict between genuinely felt emotions and emotions that employees required to show during interaction at work".

In a call centre context, employees generally are expected to display positive emotions and suppress their negative emotions in their interactions with customers. It is highly unlikely for employees to experience positive emotions in all situations, especially when they are interacting with demanding/unfriendly clients (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013).

Emotion-rule dissonance weakens motivation and thus performance, as the employee's stress will increase and his/her resources will be threatened. The role conflict that is experienced brings about negative emotions and the adoption of passive coping skills (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). It can be concluded that emotion-rule dissonance could be regarded as a hindrance stressor that displays a negative relationship with job-related well-being and a positive relationship with personal ill-being. When an individual is faced with hindrance stressors, he/she believes that he/she does not have the required coping mechanisms to meet the demands; no matter how much effort he/she invests (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011).

Together with emotional-rule dissonance, Xanthopoulou et al. (2013) also focus on another antecedent of emotional labour, namely *emotional demands.* Emotional demands concern emotionally charged interactions at work (e.g. customer/colleague misbehaviour) that are a significant source of job strain. The emotionally demanding circumstances in call centres require an investment of energy that possibly will drain the employees' personal resource reservoir (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013), and job strain is more likely to occur as the employees' energy is exhausted.

Moreover, individuals can influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions. This process is known as *emotional regulation* (Groth et al., 2009) and plays a significant role in surface and deep acting. Emotional regulation can help employees to shift their attitudes and move from expressing surface acting to deep acting and vice versa. Any call centre would prefer a work environment in which the employees have the ability to adjust their true emotions and to

transform these emotions in alignment with the required organisational bodily display. However, it is possible to teach employees the necessary skills needed for emotional regulation. This can be done through training and developmental courses. Once again, emotional regulation will be more natural and easy for certain personality types than others (De Villiers, 2012).

2.3.5 Transformational leadership as a critical job resource in call centres

Whereas job demands are the most important predictors of burnout, *job resources* are the most important predictors of work engagement (Bakker et al., 2014). Job resources can be regarded as those aspects of the job that help to achieve work goals, stimulate personal growth and reduce job demands (Bakker et al., 2014). Job resources can be referred to those aspects of the job that (1) are functional in achieving work goals, (2) reduce the job demands and the associated psychological and physiological costs, or (3) stimulate person growth and development (Bakker, Boyd, Dollard, Gillespie, Winefield, & Stough, 2010).

The multiple purposes of job resources indicate that they function as buffers to the demands set by a job, but also serve to motivate employees to engage with their work. Although job resources have been found to moderate the relationship between job demands and their associated negative outcomes, job resources are important in their own right (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013). Resources related to job characteristics and the work environment have motivational potential (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), serve as motivators during goal-setting, and become influential in personal development and growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job resources therefore not only buffer the effects of job demands, but also gain saliency when job demands are high (Bakker, 2011). As job demands increase, individuals rely more on their job and personal resources to deal with demands. Job and personal resources thus influence each other in a cyclical fashion. In the JD-R model, the job resources construct is one group of antecedents of work engagement.

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007), job resources can be located at various levels within the work context, namely:

- organisational level (e.g. promotional and career opportunities, remuneration, job security, organisational justice);
- social and interpersonal level (e.g. supervisory support, co-worker support, team climate, coaching, transformational leadership);
- structural work level (e.g. participative decision making, role clarity); and

- task level (e.g. autonomy, task significance and identity, feedback, skill variety, responsibility).

The present study measured job resources on the social and interpersonal level by focusing on *transformational leadership*. Muller and Rothman (2009) categorise leadership as an important job resource predicting work success. Bass, Avolio, Jung and Bruce (1999), however, state that transformational leaders use an effective leadership style at increasing worker engagement in comparison to leaders revealing a variation of different leadership styles. Transformational leaders are mainly appropriate for promoting worker engagement and decreasing job burnout and intention to quit, as they are inspiring and visionary (Avolio & Bass, 1995).

According to Muller and Rothmann (2009), a good relationship with one's supervisor/leader may decrease the negative influence of job demands (e.g. work load, emotional and physical demands) on job strain, as the leaders' gratitude and support puts job demands in another perspective. It therefore is vital for companies to reinforce support, recognition and motivation by their management and colleagues, as this will support employees in dealing with distress experienced at work.

According to Armistead, Kiely, Hole, and Prescot (2002), effective leadership is a significant construct in determining success in a call centre. The manager of each department plays a very important role in developing and maintaining the quality of customer service as well as in upholding the morale and motivation of customer service agents. They are likely to spend around 80% of their time with their subordinates, revising their performance, coaching them, providing feedback on individual and team performance, and recognising the training needs. It is vital for managers to have excellent interpersonal skills and good technical ability, as they must be able to identify training needs, and have the competency to have constructive dialogues as well as coaching sessions with their agents (Armistead et al., 2002). Mickan and Rodger (2002) furthermore state that these leaders should be properly skilled and all employees need clearly outlined and defined roles.

There are numerous definitions of leadership[5] and these differ in many respects, including who exerts influence, the intended purpose of the influence, the manner in which influence is

[5] Powerful and strong leadership has been regarded as a key element for organisations and society as a whole (Janse van Rensburg, 2010).

exerted, and the outcome of the influence attempt (Yukl, 2013). However, for this study, the definition provided by House (as cited in Yukl, 2013, p. 19) is most applicable: "Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organisation."

The latest studies on call centres (Bothma & Roodt, 2013; Holstad, Korek, Rigotti, & Mohr, 2014) have proven that inadequate training and deficiency of managerial support can lead to negative consequences (such as depression, emotional exhaustion, job stress, anxiety) for the employee. The specific leadership style implemented in an organisation therefore plays a vital role in the outcomes and consequences one can expect.

Holstad et al. (2014) state that transformational leadership relates to better well-being of followers, as transformational leaders provide a high level of job resources, such as good working conditions. Macey and Schneider (2008) state that *transformational leadership* has a direct effect on employees' level of trust and an indirect effect, through the creation of trust, on behavioural and work engagement. It is also reported that burnout is negatively related with all the facets of transformational leadership (Stordeur, D'hoore, & Vandenberghe, 2001). This means that transformational leadership will lead to lower levels of burnout. According to Bakker et al. (2014), transformational leadership is one of the key job resources predicting employee work engagement.

As leadership is brought about by the dynamics of organisational environments, it is vital to understand which leadership style works best in which situations (Bass, 1985). According to Shokane, Stanz and Slabbert (2004), the nature of leadership in South Africa shows a discrepancy between the transactional and transformational leadership dimensions. Transactional leadership can be described as an exchange of rewards for compliance, whereas transformational leadership can be regarded as the leader's effect on followers in that they feel trust, appreciation, loyalty and respect for their leader (Bass, 1985; Shokane, Stanz and Slabbert, 2004).

For Bass (1985), transformational leadership is individual in nature, but does not comprise mutually exclusive processes. A person high on transformational leadership makes the followers feel trust, admiration, respect towards the leader and loyalty, and they are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do (Yukl, 2013). "The leader transforms and motivates his/her followers by (1) making them more aware of the importance

of task outcomes, (2) inducing them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organisations, and (3) activating their higher-order needs" (Yukl, 2013, p. 313).

The available literature on effective leadership seems to recommend that effective leaders tend to be transformational rather than transactional in nature (Janse van Rensburg, 2010). Bass (1985) states that transformational leadership increases follower motivation as well as performance more than transactional leadership, yet, according to Robbins and Judge (2013), transactional and transformational leadership complement each other; they are not contrasting styles to get things done. In addition, transformational leadership builds on transactional leadership and produces levels of follower effort and performance beyond what transactional leadership alone can do. However, the present study agreed with Bass (1985) and therefore focuses solely on transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership consist of four characteristics, described by Van Eeden, Cilliers, and Van Deventer (2008) as follows:

a) Idealised influence

Idealised influence suggests that followers respect, admire and trust the leader. They are content with the leader's behaviour, accept his/her values, and are dedicated to achieve the leader's vision. The leader shows dedication and enthusiasm, a strong sense of purpose, and assurance in the purpose and actions of the group. Showing this kind of commitment will ensure the success of a group and gives followers a sense of empowerment and ownership.

b) Inspirational motivation

Inspirational motivation refers to the leader's enthusiasm and optimism in generating an idea of the future, thus stimulating similar feelings with followers. The leader is seen to ensure that the vision, particular goals and expectations are clearly communicated, and self-assurance is expressed in followers' ability to achieve these expectations.

c) Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation implies a leader who values the intellectual ability of followers and who ensures innovation and develops creativity. Others are encouraged to reframe problems, use a universal perspective in understanding problems, question the status quo, and approach problems from dissimilar angles. The leader consequently generates readiness for adjustment and develops the ability to solve current and future problems.

d) Individualised consideration

Individualised consideration implies that the leader considers the capabilities of followers and their level of maturity to determine their need for further development. He/she acts as a mentor, paying personal attention, listening to others' concerns, and providing feedback, advice, support, and encouragement. The leader moreover designs suitable strategies to develop individual followers to achieve higher levels of motivation, potential and performance. Support is provided and progress monitored.

However, these individual scores were treated in a summative manner in the present study, giving a single global score of transformational leadership.

Taking into consideration the definitions of the above four characteristics, it can be concluded that the effectiveness of transformational leadership not only depends on the leader him/herself, but also on the employees' *perception* of their leader. Hater and Bass (1988) agree with this two-way relationships by stating that transformational leadership is positively related with (1) how effective the followers perceive their leaders to be, (2) the level of satisfaction the subordinates experience when they are with their leader, (3) how much effort the subordinates are willing to put in for their leader, and (4) how well the subordinates perform according to their leader.

Furthermore, research has shown that transformational leadership is significantly correlated with organisational functioning. It was found that this leadership style is positively related with organisational commitment of followers, satisfaction with the leader and reduced levels of job stress (Hetland & Sandal, 2003). Hetland and Sandal (2003) furthermore state that transformational leadership has a strong relationship with the motivation of the subordinates.

Transformational leadership thus can be regarded as an essential leadership style for call centre managers when they want to improve the total quality of the organisation in which they work. Barling, Slater and Kelloway (2000) report that the practising of transformational leadership would bring forth an increase in followers' affective commitment and satisfaction. By using this leadership style, leaders will transform themselves as well as their followers to be more effective and more successful within their work environment.

2.3.6 Emotional intelligence (EI) as a critical personal resource in call centres

In addition, a main extension of the original JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001) is the inclusion of *personal resources* in the model and theory. Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2009) reason that personal resources function in the same way as job resources. They protect the employees from demanding situations and associated costs, they help employees achieve their goals, and lastly, they fuel growth and development. Personal resources can be regarded as positive self-evaluation, which refers to the individual's sense of ability to control and influence his/her environment successfully. Such positive self-evaluation predicts motivation, performance, goal setting, job and life satisfaction and other desirable outcomes (Bakker et al., 2014).

Regardless of the existing body of knowledge on the personal resources component of the JD-R model, the need exists to validate and expand this research area (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Armon, Shirom and Melamed (2012) argue for the importance of understanding the aetiology of individual characteristics related to burnout in order to develop preventative interventions. The present study argues for the importance of understanding individual characteristics related to work engagement with the aim of validating the working of the JD-R model. Knowledge of the functioning of personal resources in the JD-R model will enable HR managers to develop interventions that can foster the growth of personal resources in the pursuit of optimising employee engagement. As a result, the present study focuses on personal resources that could be developed and in which employees could be trained, rather than focusing on fixed personal resources (such as employees' personality type).

Bakker and Demerouti (2008, p. 213) describe personal resources as "positive self-evaluation that are linked to resiliency and refer to individuals' sense of their ability to control and impact upon their environment successfully".

From this definition, *emotional intelligence* can be considered as one of the most important personal factors that determine success in life as well as psychological well-being. It is also stated that emotional intelligence may be a key adaptive mechanism for helping individuals interact with the environment, including their work environment (Oginska-Bulik, 2006). Oginska-Bulik (2006) furthermore states that emotional intelligence is related to success at work and plays an important role in specific aspects of effective team leadership and team performance.

Usually, intelligence has been related with performance in IQ tests. However, over the years it has come to be realised that IQ is actually one of many types of intelligence (McQueen, 2004). Research has pointed out seven key types of intelligences, but these seven major types can be further categorised into multiple, varied abilities. The multiple intelligences can practically be incorporated into three groups, namely (1) *abstract intelligence*, concerned with mathematical and verbal skills; (2) *concrete intelligence*, concerned with manipulation of objects; and (3) *social intelligence*, concerned with understanding and relating to people (McQueen, 2004).

Emotional intelligence has its origins in the social intelligence category, first suggested by Thorndyke (1920), who noted that it was of value in human interaction and relationships. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the capacity to process emotional information accurately and efficiently, together with that information relevant to the recognition, construction and regulation of emotions in oneself and others. Such emotional information usually delivers information about an individual's relationship with the world (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). Therefore, emotionally intelligent people can be defined in part as those who regulate their emotions according to a logically consistent model of emotional functioning (Mayer & Salovey, 1995).

Within the stated group of social intelligence, two types of personal intelligence are differentiated: *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal.* Interpersonal intelligence can be explained as the ability to understand other people and to work well with them (McQueen, 2004). Accordingly, it is the ability to understand other individuals' emotions and intentions. Intrapersonal intelligence, on the other hand, involves an individual being capable to form an exact picture of his/her self and to use this to function successful in life. An individual high in intrapersonal intelligence has the ability to recognise his/her own feelings and to take account of these feelings and emotions in social behaviour. Gignac (2010) builds on this theory by stating that a model of emotional intelligence should incorporate psychological attributes that have direct relevance to the identification, utilisation and/or management of emotions.

Consequently, individuals high in emotional intelligence are more aware of their own emotions and are likely to be more sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others compared to those low in emotional intelligence (Johnson & Spector, 2007). These individuals high in emotional intelligence have the ability to regulate emotion in themselves and, as a result, facilitate a speedy recovery from psychological distress. In view of this, such individuals are

better equipped to engage in emotional labour in order to satisfy display rules and contribute to a positive service experience for the client in the call centre environment (Johnson & Spector, 2007).

The seven dimensions that will be discussed and measured in the present study involve (a) Emotional Self-Awareness; (b) Emotional Expression; (c) Emotional Awareness of Others; (d) Emotional Reasoning; (e) Emotional Self-Management; (f) Emotional Management of Others; and (g) Emotional Self-Control.

a) Emotional Self-Awareness (ESA)

Emotional self-awareness is the frequency with which individuals consciously identify their emotions at work. It also relates to how often individuals are aware that their emotions may motivate or affect how they think and behave at work. The dimension does not emphasise either negative or positive emotions, but rather includes a balance of both positive and negative affect states. High scores on emotional self-awareness indicate that the person frequently is aware of his/her emotions at work, what causes these emotions, as well as how these emotions affect their thoughts, decisions and behaviour at work (Gignac, 2010).

b) Emotional Awareness of Others (EAO)

Emotional awareness of others refers to how often an individual identifies the emotions expressed by others in the workplace. The emphasis is being aware of not just the verbal expressions of emotion by others, but also non-verbal expression. High scores in this dimension indicate that the individual frequently and accurately identifies the emotions of others at work, as well as the causes of these emotions (Gignac, 2010).

c) Emotional Reasoning (ER)

Emotional reasoning relates to how often an individual incorporates emotionally relevant information when making decisions or solving problems at work. This dimension is not an anti-rationality disposition, however. Instead, it measures a balanced approach to problem solving that ensures that both one's own emotions and the emotions of others are taken into consideration when decisions are made at work. It also emphasises that emotions should be used so that others are engaged successfully. A high score on emotional reasoning means that one's own and others' emotions are considered frequently when making decisions at work, and that the individual points out that such consideration has taken place (Gignac, 2010).

d) Emotional Expression (EE)

Emotional expression is the frequency with which individuals express emotions appropriately at work. In this context, appropriate means the right way, at the right time, and to the right people. Emotion expression dimension involves balance between the items relevant to positive and negative emotions, such as positive feedback and anger. It does not, however, specify a specific method of emotional expression, as what is appropriate in the expression of emotion may either verbal or non-verbal in nature (or a combination of the two). Scoring high on emotional expression indicates that the individual frequently expresses effective emotion at work, such as happiness, frustration, and feedback to colleagues (Gignac, 2010).

e) Emotional Self-Management (ESM)

Emotional self-management refers to how often an individual successfully manages his or her own emotions at work. A great deal of emphasis is put on the successful adjustment to negative emotional states at work, although some focus falls on being involved in activities to help maintain a positive emotional state while at work. To a great extent, emotional self-management involves moving on from emotional setbacks, rather than dwelling on the situation. A high score on this dimension means that activities are engaged in frequently that contribute to the positive development of emotions in oneself, while not dwelling on negative emotions too much (Gignac, 2010).

f) Emotional Management of Others (EMO)

The emotional management of others is the relative frequency with which the emotions of others are managed successfully at work. This subscale includes actions that motivate colleagues or subordinates, and that modify the emotions of others for their own personal betterment at work. The emotional management of others entails the creation of a positive working environment for others, or else helping individuals resolve issues that are causing them distress. High scores on emotional management indicate that the individual frequently engages in creating an emotionally positive work environments for others, as well as helps his/her colleagues resolve issues that may have a negative effect on their performance (Gignac, 2010).

g) Emotional Self-Control (ESC)

Emotional self-control is how often an individual controls strong emotions appropriately in the workplace. A great deal of the focus is on being able to demonstrate that focus or concentration is maintained on the tasks at hand in the face of emotional adversity. Although similar to emotional self-management, emotional self-control includes an additional focus on

the demonstrating behaviour that shows that intense reactive emotions at work, such as anger or jubilation, are controlled. In this sense, emotional self-control is more reactive, while emotional self-management is more proactive. High scores indicate that the individual frequently demonstrates the capacity to remain focused when anxious or disappointed at work, and also that the individual demonstrates the ability not to lose his/her temper (Gignac, 2010).

However, the present study will focus on the *total* emotional intelligence score. The total EI score is based on an equally weighted composite of the seven Genos EI dimensions defined above. Thus, the total EI score represents the frequency with which an individual engages in a diverse variety of EI behaviours relevant to the identification of emotions (of the self and others), the reasoning with emotions, and the general management of emotions (self, others, and emotional control).

2.3.7 Psychological capital as a critical personal resource in call centres

Psychological capital can be identified as a further personal resource. Xanthopoulou et al.'s (2009) conceptualisation of personal resources parallels the concept of psychological capital. Psychological capital consists of four resources (hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience). These resources, both independently and combined into a higher order construct, have been recognised as crucial for individuals' psychological well-being in general, as well as for work-related well-being in particular. Unlike personality traits that are relatively fixed, these personal resources are flexible and open to change and development, and thus are considered most appropriate for the present study.

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is made up of four resources (optimism, efficacy, resiliency and hope), which are also considered to be susceptible to change (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Psychological capital is a central concept in positive organisational behaviour (POB) literature. POB is defined by Luthans (2002, p. 59) as "the study and application of positively-oriented human resource strengths and psychological resource capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace".

Psychological capital is a central construct of POB and seen as a vital composite construct that can assist companies in addressing human capital issues (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). It emphasises the positive nature and strong points of employees and the role this plays in

fuelling employees' growth and performance. According to Avey, Luthans and Jensen (2009), all four of the components of psychological capital (hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy) are open to development through short training interventions. These four constructs are presented in brief below:

a) Hope

Snyder, Irving and Anderson (1991, p. 287) define hope as "[a] positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)".

Snyder (2002) furthermore explains hope as a multidimensional construct that consists of an individual's waypower and willpower. *Waypower* is an individual's ability to develop alternative pathways and plans in order to accomplish goals in the face of obstacles, whereas *willpower* can be described as an individual's agency or determination to achieve goals. Hope therefore enables individuals to be motivated to achieve success with the task at hand by looking for the best pathway (Simons & Buitendach, 2013).

b) Resilience

Resilience can be defined as people's ability to manipulate the environment successfully in order to protect them from the negative consequences of adverse events (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Luthans (2002) provides a more comprehensive definition that includes people's ability to bounce back from adversity, uncertainty, failure, conflict or even positive change. Incidentally, people high in resilience will be able to move on with their lives after having had a stressful experience or event. Resilience therefore highlights the strengths of individuals and their coping resources to successfully resolve and/or manage testing situations (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Resilience is not the same as the other three constructs, as it is exclusively reactive in nature instead of proactive (Avey, Wernsing, & Mhatre, 2011).

c) Optimism

Optimism is more closely related to positive psychology than the other three constructs, as it is regarded as a realistic, dynamic and flexible construct that can be learned and developed (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Optimism can be considered as a positive expectation of future events, regardless of individual ability (Avey et al., 2011). It can be defined by two main dimensions of how people explain events, namely persistence and pervasiveness. These

individuals persevere in the face of obstacles and stressful events, and an optimistic employee therefore will be more capable to assess external, short-term and situational circumstances.

d) Self-efficacy

Bandura's (1977) classic work in self-efficacy suggests that efficacy is a belief in one's personal ability to accomplish a given task. Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) go further by defining self-efficacy as an individual's belief regarding his/her ability to mobilise the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action necessary to achieve a specific task within a particular context. An individual's perception and interpretation of events will effect and control how he/she addresses obstacles, as well as how he/she experiences stress symptoms (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Avey et al. (2011) state that this personally derived sense of efficacy is generated through four processes: (1) task mastery, through which an individual successfully accomplishes a given task; (2) vicarious learning, during which observing similar others being successful generates a belief that the individual can also succeed; (3) social persuasion, in which relevant others persuade or convince the individual that he/she has the ability to accomplish a given task; and (4) physiological or emotional arousal, during which the individual's confidence is raised through interpreting physiological sensations or feelings as contributing to their capabilities to accomplish tasks. Individuals high in self-efficacy will perceive challenges as manageable, given the necessary competencies and effort (Simons & Buitendach, 2013).

According to Leiter and Bakker (2010), psychological capital taken as a whole provides a greater resource than the four psychological capital resources taken individually. This finding supports the idea that psychological capital may be a resource that is a greater buffer to burnout than the individual components, and also may be above and beyond simply reducing job demands (Leiter & Bakker, 2010).[6]

Although research on psychological capital has attracted a lot of attention, little is known about the antecedents of psychological capital. The most powerful predictor of psychological capital was found to be individual characteristics. Avey et al. (2011) found that individual differences explained 24% of variance in psychological capital. Regression analysis reveals that the level of self-esteem, as individual difference, uniquely predicts variance in psychological capital (Avey, 2014). Supervision was also found to predict psychological

[6] There is quite a bit of evidence that shows that psychological capital as a core construct has predictive value above and beyond the first-order latent variables (hope, efficacy, resiliency and optimism). Therefore, this study focuses on the effect of psychological capital as a whole.

capital, explaining 23% of the variance in psychological capital (Avey, 2014). Task complexity, as a job characteristic, also can be seen as an antecedent of the positive state psychological capital (Luthans, Norman, & Avolio, 2008). Thus, the way the job is designed is important and can have an influence on the level of psychological capital of the call centre agents.

In a large body of literature, psychological capital has been shown to predict a wide range of work-related behavioural and attitudinal outcomes. Specifically, psychological capital has been related to increased job performance (across various measures of performance and sources of performance ratings), job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviours (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011), mastery orientation and innovation (Luthans, Youssef, & Rawski, 2011), perceived employability (Chen & Lim, 2012), psychological well-being (Avey, Luthans, Smith, & Palmer, 2010), and happiness (Culbertson, Fullagar, & Mills, 2010). According to Wernsing (2014), one significant consequence of psychological capital is employee performance. Wernsing (2014) found that psychological capital was a significant and unique predictor of employee performance in the workplace. Psychological capital consequently adds value in a company, as it helps reduce these negative work-related behaviours and attitudes amongst employees. Moreover, Karatepe and Karadas (2014) suggest that psychological capital is significant and relevant in frontline service jobs, as it reduces work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and turnover and absence intentions.

In addition, psychological capital has been found to be negatively related to undesirable phenomena from the organisational perspective, such as cynicism, turnover intentions, job stress, anxiety, deviance (Avey et al., 2011), job search behaviours (Avey et al., 2009), dimensions of burnout – emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment (Cheung, Tang, & Tang, 2011), incivility (Roberts, Scherer, & Bowyer, 2011), and counterproductive work behaviours (Avey, Luthans, & Youssef, 2010). Recently, Luthans, Youssef, Sweetman and Harms (2013) suggested that psychological capital may also have important implications for life domains such as personal relationships and health that are outside the work context. Accordingly, they extended the conceptual model of work-based psychological capital to a broader, more comprehensive model capturing the origins and effects of psychological capital both within and across different life domains. Vogelgesang, Clapp-Smith and Osland (2014) argued that domain-specific psychological

capital (work, relationships or health) contributes to the domain-specific satisfaction, which in turn contributes to the overall well-being and higher levels of psychological capital over time.

A study conducted by Krasikoval, Lester and Harms (2015) builds on Luthans et al.'s (2013) recent work on health-related effects of psychological capital. They found that soldiers with higher self-rated levels of psychological capital prior to deployment were less likely to be diagnosed with mental health problems (PTSD, anxiety and depression) and substance abuse problems (alcohol and drug abuse) than soldiers with lower levels of psychological capital. Moreover, evidence was obtained that the negative effect of psychological capital on mental health diagnoses was accounted for by soldiers' health perceptions. Specifically, soldiers with higher levels of psychological capital were likely to report better health and, as a consequence, less likely to receive a diagnosis for mental health problems (Krasikoval et al., 2015).

Consequently, it can be concluded that psychological capital will have a positive influence on an employee's overall wellbeing (Vogelgesang et al., 2014), and therefore is a valuable construct that should be taken into consideration within a call centre environment.

2.4 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LATENT VARIABLES

2.4.1 Job burnout and work engagement

Makikangas, Feldt, Kinnunen and Tolvanen (2012) state that job burnout and work engagement are considered as contradictory indicators of occupational well-being, in other words, opposite poles of a single construct. This view is supported by various other researchers, such as Bakker & Demerouti (2014); Gan & Gan (2014); Narainsamy & Van der Westhuizen (2013; and Vassos, Nankervis, Skerry and Lante (2013). According to this view it is very unlikely that burned-out employees would show high degrees of work engagement, or that highly engaged employees would suffer from severe job burnout. These findings therefore support the fact that burnout and engagement are related, as employees' suffering from burnout will certainly not be engaged with their work. However, different views exist on whether burnout and work engagement do in fact represent related constructs as opposed to independent constructs (Makikangas et al., 2012). For example, Maslach and Leiter (1997) found that work engagement is a different construct to job burnout. This viewpoint sees work engagement as characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy and representing the

opposite of the burnout dimensions, which are exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy respectively (Gan & Gan, 2014). Schaufeli et al. (2002) support the findings of Maslach and Leiter (1997) by claiming that the absence of burnout symptoms cannot be regarded as a sign of high degrees of work engagement, but rather that work engagement is a distinct construct independent from job burnout. An employee not experiencing work engagement does not necessarily experience job burnout symptoms. According to Maslach and Leiter (1997), employees can experience a state in which they are in equilibrium between work engagement and job burnout.

Research conducted to date thus fails to demonstrate consistent support for whether job burnout and work engagement are opposite indicators of occupational well-being (Makikangas et al., 2012; Narainsamy & Van der Westhuizen, 2013), or whether or not these two constructs operate independently. The point of departure of the current study is that job burnout and work engagement are however related to one another. Consequently, the following hypothesis will be tested:

Hypothesis 1: Job burnout ($\eta 2$) has a significant negative effect on work engagement ($\eta 1$) among call centre employees.

2.4.2 Work engagement and intention to quit

Engagement involves how individuals employ themselves in the performance of their job. Moreover, engagement has to do with the active use of emotions and behaviours in addition to cognitions (Saks, 2006) and can be regarded as an antecedent of job involvement.

According to many researchers, there is a general belief that employee engagement and business results such as performance are associated with each other. Yet engagement is an individual-level construct; therefore, if it does lead to business results, it must first affect individual-level outcomes. Considering this, there is reason to assume that employee engagement will be related to an individual's attitude, behaviours and intentions (Saks, 2006).

According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) there are numerous reasons to believe that engagement is related to work outcomes, as the experience of engagement is defined as a fulfilling, positive work-related experience and state of mind and is correlated with good health and positive work affect. These stated positive experiences are expected to result in positive work outcomes (Saks, 2006), and therefore Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) stated that

engaged employees more than likely have a better attachment to their organisation and a lower tendency to leave the organisation.

According to Bakker et al., (2014, p.11) in the motivation-driven process of the JD-R theory, "job resources were the only predictors of dedication and organisational commitment which, in turn, were related to turnover intentions" (whereas work engagement is most strongly related to motivational outcomes).

On the other hand, within the energy-driven process (job burnout), job demands are the most important predictors of health problems, which in turn rather are related to sickness absence and not turnover intentions (Bakker et al., 2014). As the JD-R model is used as a guideline in the present study, this study therefore will focus on the relationship between the employees' work engagement and their intention to quit.

In addition to the JD-R model (Bakker et al., 2014), other research had reported numerous relationships between engagement and work outcomes. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) found that engagement is positively related to organisational commitment and negatively related to intention to quit. It also has been found that engagement is negatively related to turnover intentions and mediates the relationship between job resources and turnover intention (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Therefore, the following hypothesis will be tested in the present study:

Hypothesis 2: Work engagement ($\eta 1$) has a significant negative effect on intention to quit ($\eta 3$) among call centre employees.

2.4.3 Emotional labour (i.e. emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands) and job burnout

According to Bakker et al. (2014), job demands are more important predictors of burnout than (the lack of) job resources. Job demands are regarded as those aspects of the job that require sustained physical, cognitive and emotional effort. After a lengthy exposure to high job demands, employees may become chronically exhausted and distance themselves physically from their work, thus start to experience burnout. The negative link between emotionally demanding conditions and employee well-being can be described by the health impairment process of the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. Consequently, these emotionally demanding conditions in call centres require energy investment, which may

exhaust employees' resource reservoir (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013). When energy is depleted, job strain is likely to occur, which in turn can again be related to job burnout.

Burnout has constantly been linked with physiological and affective outcomes, as well as with organisational consequences such as negative work attitudes, reduced levels of performance, and an increased absenteeism (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). The repeated interaction with people that call centre employees experience every day may be tiring, given its implication for workload, but such interaction can also involve the need for these employees to regulate their emotional expression in mandated ways (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). This lack of attention to emotional nature and the emotional strain employees experience could directly be linked to burnout (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) found that employees in 'people work' jobs experience more burnout than employees in other occupational groups. Research has demonstrated that service work can be classified as 'high burnout' jobs, based on their frequency of interaction as well as the emotional control required while interacting with customers. The high emotional control needed to maintain these positive relationships with the customers can result in exhaustion and stress (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002), whereas job burnout is caused by repeated stress and emotional exhaustion. Therefore the link can be drawn from emotional labour to job burnout.

According to Ashill, Rod, Thirkell and Carruthers (2009), call centre employees are constantly involved in demanding, stressful and repetitive work roles, as they are routinely engaged in highly demanding scripted interactions with customers and are continuously assessed and monitored by management. These employees experience role stress as a result of the conflicting demands of the clients, supervisors and organisation. All of these aspects associated with a call centre environment can be considered as emotional demands. *Emotional demands*, as described earlier, concern emotionally charged interactions at work that are considered to be a dynamic source of job strain. As a result, call centre employees often suffer from burnout, which is a form of psychological strain caused from persistent work stress.

Surface acting, a dimension of emotional labour, appears when an employee tries to change his or her outward appearance and behaviour by suppressing his/her true feelings (Kruml & Geddes, 2000). This process is linked to stress outcomes due to the internal strain, as well as the psychological energy of overpowering true feelings. Scott and Barnes (2011) state that

surface acting is positively related to job withdrawal, which can also be linked to job burnout. Consequently, surface acting may result in employees feeling detached from their own feelings as well as from other people's feelings, suggesting a relationship with the dimension depersonalisation. It also leads to emotional dissonance, as the feelings displayed are not the same as the real ones the call centre employees experience. When the employee believes that the displays are not effective or did not satisfy his/her customers, feelings of diminished personal accomplishment arise (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). Surface acting therefore is expected to relate to all three dimensions of burnout.

Deep acting can be defined as the process of controlling internal feelings to feel the required display rules. According to Hulsheger and Schewe (2011), deep acting has been proven to have a positive effect on job performance. Doing "emotion work" can be seen as a way of decreasing the state of emotional dissonance, as well as resulting in a feeling of accomplishment and achievement if the performance is effective. Therefore, deep acting might not correlate with emotional exhaustion, as it minimises the tension of dissonance (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002). It is expected that deep acting will relate to lower depersonalisation and more personal accomplishment, as positive feedback from the customers may increase a sense of personal efficacy (Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002).

Apart from, but also in line with, deep acting and surface acting, *emotion-rule dissonance* is considered as some kind of person-role conflict stemming from the incongruence between emotions that are truly felt and the emotions required by the display rules (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). The role conflict that is experienced brings about negative emotions and the adoption of passive coping skills (Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011). As stated earlier, one can conclude that emotion-rule dissonance can be regarded as a hindrance stressor that displays a negative relationship with job-related well-being and a positive relationship with personal ill-being. Moreover, as job burnout is strongly related to health outcomes, a strong relationship therefore can be considered between emotion-rule dissonance and an employee's level of job burnout. The following hypotheses will be tested in the study:

Hypothesis 3: Emotional demands ($\xi 2$) have a significant positive effect on job burnout ($\eta 2$) among call centre employees.

Hypothesis 4: Emotion-rule dissonance ($\xi 3$) has a significant positive effect on job burnout ($\eta 2$) among call centre employees.

2.4.4 Transformational leadership and work engagement

According to the extended JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), job resources, and particularly social support, may reinforce employees' work engagement. This will be done by increasing their extrinsic motivation through offering instrumental assistance to employees to help them achieve their professional goals, as well as intrinsic motivation by fostering growth and development (Stinglhamber & Caesens, 2014).

It is remarkable finding that, within the literature on the JD-R model, a small number of scholars have examined the positive influence that *perceived* organisational support (i.e., a job resource) will have on work engagement. However, Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2011) propose that, by reinforcing employees' intrinsic interest in their task, perceived organisational support would increase their engagement in their work. Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2011) furthermore suggest several ways in which perceived organisational support could increase employees' interests in their tasks and in turn increase their work engagement. The first of these is creating the probability of reward for high performance among employees; secondly, creating among employees the belief that their organisation will provide them with the help and emotional resources when needed; and thirdly, fulfilling their socio-emotional needs such as their need for self-esteem or for approval. Evidently, a respectable transformational leader will improve the employees' perceptions that they have of their managers/leader in the organisation and, in turn, increase their interest in their tasks, leading to an increase in work engagement.

Zhu, Avolio and Walumbwa (2009) state that more attention should be paid to the relationship between transformational leadership and positive organisational behaviour (POB). One can consider transformational leadership to have a positive relationship with follower's engagement, because of the emphasis the leader places on the follower's responsibilities to engage in greater workplace challenges. Providing further empirical justification for this linkage, Zhu et al. (2009) reported that transformational leadership has been positively related to a higher level of followers' psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability, which would be expected to be positively related to higher levels of workforce engagement.

Employees will have higher levels of work engagement when leaders take care of their basic needs and higher order needs. Transformational leadership is characterised by the motivation to raise followers to higher levels of potential and to satisfy their higher order needs. Tims et

al. (2012) argue that employees who receive support, coaching and inspiration from their leader will experience their work as being more challenging, they will be more involved and would more likely be engaged with their tasks. Transformational leadership also has been linked positively to the psychological conditions of work engagement, namely meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability. The above-motioned linkage will increase the follower's engagement (Zhu et al., 2009).

Digging deeper, transformational leadership, as described earlier, traditionally is divided into four components, namely (1) inspirational motivation, (2) idealised influence, (3) individual consideration and (4) intellectual stimulation (Bass et al., 1999). *Inspirational motivation* focuses on the communication of an appealing and interesting vision of the future and the use of symbols to articulate this vision (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1995). In other words, the supervisor is optimistic and enthusiastic about the future (Bass et al., 1999). *Idealised influence* refers to behaviours like showing that benefits for the group are more important than benefits for the individual, demonstrating high ethical norms, and being a role model for the subordinates (Barling et al., 2000). Inspirational motivation and idealised influence together are also called "charisma". Charismatic leaders have a positive influence on their subordinates and can change the self-focus of the employees to a collective focus (Yukl, 2013). As a result, subordinates become more involved with the vision of the leader and are willing to make sacrifices for that vision (Bass & Avolio, 1990). The third component of transformational leadership, *individual consideration*, refers to coaching, supporting and stimulating subordinates. The supervisor acknowledges followers' feelings and emotions and their need to grow and develop themselves (Dibley, 2009). Employees are seen as unique individuals who need specific, individual attention that is congruent with the developmental phase they are in (Avolio et al., 1995). The fourth and last component of transformational leadership is called *intellectual stimulation*, which means that the supervisor challenges the subordinate to see problems from a different perspective. In this way, the supervisor makes the workers active thinkers within the organisation and, consequently, the employees become more involved with the organisation.

Taking these four components of transformational leadership into consideration, it can be concluded that call centre agents' feelings of involvement, cohesiveness, commitment, potency and performance will be enhanced by a transformational leadership style (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). When the call centre agents receive support, inspiration and quality coaching from their supervisor/manager, they most likely will experience work as more

challenging, involving and satisfying, and consequently will become highly engaged with their job tasks. Taking into account that satisfaction with one's co-workers is related to work engagement (Avery, McKay, & Wilson, 2007), it is conceivable that satisfaction that arises from working with a transformational leader may have similar results.

Janse van Rensburg (2010) states that Dibley (2009) also found a significant, positive relationship between transformational leadership and followers' levels of engagement. This suggests that a change in leadership may well result in some change in the level of work engagement. Based on these findings and leadership theory, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

Hypothesis 5: Transformational leadership (η4) has a significant positive effect on work engagement (η1) among call centre employees[7].

2.4.5 Transformational leadership and emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is regarded as an essential aspect for the exercise of successful leadership. Barling et al. (2000) report that there are various reasons why individuals with a high emotional intelligence would be more likely to engage in a leadership style such as transformational leadership. First of all, when a leader is able to identify and manage his/her own emotions, the leader will be regarded as a role model for his/her followers and moreover will increase the followers' respect and trust for him/her as leader. This aspect of leadership is congruent with the meaning of *idealised influence.* Secondly, focusing on the leader understanding his/her followers' emotions, a leader with a higher emotional intelligence will be in a vital position to realise the extent to which his/her followers' expectations can be raised. The latter is consistent with *inspirational motivation.* Lastly, the ability of a leader to recognise his/her followers' emotions and needs and to act upon them can be regarded as *individualised consideration.*

Harms and Credé (2010) reported that a number of dimensions of EI would facilitate transformational leadership: (1) *empathy* will be regarded as a critical aspect in the process of leaders displaying individual consideration of their followers; (*2) the management of emotions* may enhance positive affect and increase the followers' confidence, which will lead to the expressing and generating of new ideas; (3) leaders who are *self-aware* may possess a

[7] It should be noted here that transformational leadership is a reflection of an employee's perceptions of transformational leadership. It therefore is not the objective reality that is important here, but instead the employees' psychological interpretation of reality. Therefore, any reference to transformational leadership implies followers' perceptions of transformational leadership.

higher sense of purpose and meaning; and (4) those leaders capable of *managing their emotions* are more likely to set their followers' needs before their own. Cavazotte, Moreno and Hickmann (2012) argue that the emotional intelligence of an individual is a more important predictor of personal success than personality traits. They found that emotional intelligence was significantly related to transformational leadership.

However, the present study focuses on the level of emotional intelligence of the *subordinates* and not that of the leaders. It will concentrate on whether these subordinates with a high level of emotional intelligence will respond more effectively towards transformational leaders in the way they perceive their leaders. The leadership style is important for an increase in the subordinates' performance; however, the leadership style alone cannot be responsible for subordinate performance. The employee him/herself plays a vital role. Employees' perceptions of their leader's leadership style and their feeling about their ability to achieve organisational goals are important (Cavazotte et al., 2012).

Consequently, it is not only the emotional intelligence of the transformational leader that is of importance, but the emotional intelligence of the subordinates also plays a key role in the effectiveness of this leadership style. Farahani, Taghodosi and Behboudi (2011) report a link between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, and state that the follower's emotional intelligence moderates the relationship. Thus, the effectiveness of the transformational leader also depends on the follower's level of emotional intelligence. Managers who engage in transformational leadership will be more effective if their subordinates have higher levels of emotional intelligence (Farahani et al., 2011). The following hypothesis can be formulated:

Hypothesis 6: The emotional intelligence ($\xi 1$) of the subordinates will have a significant positive effect on transformational leadership ($\eta 4$)[8].

2.4.6 Transformational leadership and psychological capital

Gooty, Gavin, Johnson, Frazier and Snow (2009) define transformational leadership as leaders who can arouse their followers to high levels of performance by appealing to their values, emotions, attitudes and beliefs. Transformational leaders are leaders who inspire their

[8] Once again, it should be noted here that transformational leadership is a reflection of an employee's perceptions of transformational leadership. Consequently, it is not the objective reality that is important here, but instead the employees' psychological interpretations of reality. Therefore, any reference to transformational leadership implies followers' perceptions, which will be influenced by the followers' level of emotional intelligence.

followers with a vision of what they are capable of doing and drive them towards self-actualisation. Gooty et al. (2009, p. 355) explain that

> such a powerful vision can then facilitate the follower's ability to (1) set goals and believe that those goals can be achieved, (2) generate a positive appraisal of the future, (3) create belief in one's ability to successfully perform tasks that tie in with the vision, and (4) trigger the ability to bounce back from adversity because a favourable future is just around the corner.

Followers' *perceptions* of their leader's behaviour of setting high performance expectations act as a facilitator to their motivation and so draw greater effort toward their goals and shaping their perceptions of a favourable future (Gooty et al., 2009). Previous research has demonstrated that transformational leaders encourage followers to ask questions, challenge the present, and think in formerly unexplored ways. Consequently, the followers' perceptions of the transformational leader's behaviour of intellectual stimulation open a broad range of thought patterns regarding work problems, and the followers' range of potential solutions to a given problem multiply significantly.

Gooty et al. (2009) state that this development will allow followers to have faith in their ability to persevere towards goals and produce a future which is marked by images filled with goal accomplishments. Transformational leaders make an effort to connect with each follower and so seek to infuse meaning into every individual's role within the organisation. The leader therefore acts as a powerful contextual resource that influences the followers' confidence in their ability to set goals and achieve those goals, even when faced with difficulty.

All of the transformational leaders' behaviours act in tandem to achieving followers' enlarged effort via greater motivation and a belief in a more positive and confident future (Gooty et al., 2009). All in all, transformational leadership, when perceived as such by followers, acts as a contextual circumstance that helps their psychological capital to flourish. As such, Gooty et al.'s (2009) position is that a transformational leader will build a comprehensive follower-based psychological resource that is focused on setting goals and achieving them, a trust in overcoming obstacles, and a belief in a more optimistic future, as represented by psychological capital.

Not only is it important to focus on the positive effect that transformational leadership will have on followers' psychological capital, but also is necessary to look at how followers high in psychological capital will perceive and respond to their leaders (i.e. the employees' perceptions of their leaders). For example, it is found that positive psychological capital, meaning higher levels of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy, are each positively related to predicting individual performance as the individuals will perceive themselves as well their leaders in a positive light. Zhu et al. (2009) explain that this is because those who have higher levels of psychological capital are more likely to be confident, optimistic, hopeful and resilient when faced with challenging organisational tasks. Luthans et al. (2008) found that when a leader is perceived as being transformational, he/she acts as a positive contextual force that enables followers' perceptions of a positive future based in motivated effort and perseverance. With regard to the mechanisms that enable this relationship, it is noted that transformational leadership behaviours, when followers perceive them as such, can create conditions appropriate for psychological capital to thrive. From a practical standpoint, this finding highlights the importance of a transformational leader in energising the workforce toward positive psychological resources. Consequently, one might assume that followers with a high level of psychological capital will respond more positively to a transformational leader who is trying to inspire such followers to heightened levels of performance (Zhu et al., 2009). Consequently, the following hypothesis can be stated:

Hypothesis 7: The subordinates' psychological capital ($\xi 4$) has a significant positive effect on transformational leadership ($\eta 4$).[9]

2.4.7 Emotional intelligence and work engagement

Thor (2012) argues that most research done on the antecedents of work engagement focus on external factors and that insignificant attention has been paid to internal factors such as emotional intelligence. However, research has found that emotional intelligence generally is related to the same constructs as work engagement, namely personal satisfaction, work attitudes, work outcomes, self-esteem, work behaviours and job satisfaction. Thor (2012) furthermore supports the view that emotional intelligence and work engagement indeed are related and that emotional intelligence predicts a percentage of employees' work engagement.

[9] Again, take note that transformational leadership is a reflection of an employee's perceptions of transformational leadership. Consequently, it is not the objective reality that is important here, but instead the employees' psychological interpretation of reality. Therefore, any reference to transformational leadership implies followers' perceptions, which will be influenced by the followers' level of psychological capital.

In a study completed by Duran, Extremera and Rey (2012), they state that emotional intelligence is a main tool for the promotion of employee engagement. Emotional intelligence can furthermore be regarded as a factor that has the potential to bring forth positive attitudes, behaviours and outcomes linked to work engagement. Emotional intelligence therefore is regarded as a personal resource that will, according to the JD-R model, lead to work engagement amongst call centre employees. The relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement is made evident by earlier research, but additional research is necessary to provide further support. However, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

Hypothesis 8: Emotional intelligence ($\xi 1$) has a positive effect on work engagement ($\eta 1$) among call centre employees.

2.4.8 Psychological capital and work engagement

Leiter and Bakker (2010) state that the four psychological resources comprising an individual's psychological capital – hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism – have direct relationships with the three components of work engagement – vigour, dedication and absorption. Regarding the overall psychological capital and engagement, many theoretical links have been drawn to psychological capital's capacity to create the conditions necessary for flow, where individuals become absorbed/engaged in their work. Leiter and Bakker (2010) furthermore state that, even though the four psychological capital resources have discriminant validity, they are still somewhat interrelated. Leiter and Bakker (2010) propose that the components build on each other in order to create an upward spiral of resources, which can lead to employee engagement. This upward spiral consequently may broaden an individual's mind-set (concept of "growth mind-set" that people can change and develop their behaviour over time). This broadened, growing mind-set from enhanced psychological capital may provide greater energy and engagement than is possible with lower levels of psychological capital.

Taken together, the synergetic potential of efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience making up psychological capital would seem to be a powerful predictor of the interrelated components of vigour, dedication and absorption associated with work engagement. Given this potentially powerful relationship, Leiter and Bakker (2010) propose that a key component in developing work engagement can be found in developing psychological capital. Simons and Buitendach's (2013) findings also support the relationship of psychological capital as being positively related to work engagement (Karatepe & Karadas, 2014).

From the findings above, the following hypothesis can be stated:

Hypothesis 9: Psychological capital (ξ4) has a positive effect on work engagement (η1) among call centre employees.

2.5 MODERATING EFFECTS BETWEEN VARIABLES

According to Bakker et al. (2014), there are two possible ways in which demands and resources may have a *combined effect* on employees' well-being, and indirectly influence both employees and organisational performance.

2.5.1 The first interaction effect

The first interaction effect is one in which job resources and personal resources buffer the impact of job demands on strain. Several studies have shown that *job resources*, such as social support, performance feedback, autonomy, opportunities for development, etc., can mitigate the impact of job demands on strain, including burnout (Bakker et al., 2014). Bakker, Demerouti and Euwema (2005) found that the combination of high demands and low job resources significantly added to the prediction of burnout. Specifically, 56% of the interactions in their study were significant, showing that high levels of workload, emotional demands and physical demands do not result in high levels of exhaustion and cynicism if employees experience adequate levels of autonomy, receive feedback and social support, or have a high-quality relationship with their supervisors.

Furthermore, Xanthopoulou et al. (2007) focused on home-care organisation employees and found that it was mostly when these employees faced emotionally charged situations or aggressive behaviour from patients that they profited from the autonomy they had over their work, their knowledge of ways to deal with difficult situations and the support received from their managers. As a result, they confronted these situations more effectively and prevented themselves from high levels of burnout. This mechanism may be explained as a form of proactive coping. Employees probably recognise the potential demands in advance and activate resources that may undermine the negative effects of these demands before these even occur. Lastly, Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema (2005) also found that the combination of high demands and few available job resources significantly added to the prediction of job burnout.

Consequently, the buffering hypotheses will explain interactions between job demands and job resources by proposing that the relationship between job demands and burnout is weaker

for those employees enjoying a high degree of job resources. Transformational leadership is regarded as a job resource and thus it is hypothesised that it will prevent the development of negative attitudes and play a buffering role in the relationship between emotional labour (i.e. emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands) and job burnout.

Moreover, an important extension of the original JD-R model (Bakker et al., 2004; Demerouti et al., 2001) is the inclusion of *personal resources* in the model and theory. Previous studies have shown that personal resources are not only related to stress resilience, but also have positive effects on emotional as well as physical well-being (Chen, Gully, & Eden, 2001; Scheier & Carver, 1992). Although people's perceptions of and adaptation to environments are variable, depending on their levels of personal resources, these resource levels are cultivated by environmental factors (Bandura, 2000). In other words, it is proposed that personal resources may function either as *moderators* or as *mediators* in the relationship between environmental factors and (organisational) outcomes, or they may even determine the way people comprehend the environment, formulate it, and react to it (Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997).

These studies suggest that employees with high levels of personal resources have greater mastery that helps them to deal more effectively with demanding conditions, and in turn prevents them from negative outcomes (i.e. exhaustion). This suggestion combines COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002) with the buffer hypothesis of the JD-R model (Bakker et al., 2005), because it recognises the potential moderating role of personal (and not only job resources) in the model's health impairment process.

In other words, if this perspective of reciprocity to the JD-R model is applied in the present study, it may be expected that the call centre agents with high levels of psychological capital and high levels of emotional intelligence will focus more on job resources than on job demands and, as a result, they will experience lower levels of exhaustion (i.e. burnout) and higher levels of work engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013).

Psychological capital and emotional intelligence are both regarded as personal resources and thus it is hypothesised that they will prevent the development of negative attitudes and play a buffering role in the relationship between emotional labour (i.e. emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands) and job burnout.

The following hypotheses can be formulated with regard to the buffering effect that job resources and personal resources has on the relationship between job demands and burnout:

Hypothesis 10: Transformational leadership (η4) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance (ξ_3) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 11: Transformational leadership (η4) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotional demands (ξ_2) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 12: Emotional intelligence (ξ_1) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance (ξ_3) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 13: Emotional intelligence (ξ1) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotional demands (ξ_2) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 14: Psychological capital (ξ4) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance (ξ_3) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 15: Psychological capital (ξ4) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotional demands (ξ_2) and job burnout (η2).

2.5.2 The second interaction effect

The second interaction is one in which *job demands* amplify the impact of job resources and personal resources on work engagement. Research has shown that job resources become salient and have the strongest positive impact on work engagement when job demands are high. Particularly when an employee is confronted with challenging job demands, job resources become valuable and foster dedication to the tasks at hand (Bakker et al., 2014).

Hakanen, Bakker and Demerouti (2005) tested a hypothesis in which job resources will be more strongly related to work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) when dentists

are confronted with high levels of job demands. Their results showed that dentists benefited most from their job resources (in terms of work engagement) under conditions of high demands. This finding is in line with previous research in other domains (Riolli & Savicki, 2003) and with COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002). It suggests that resources in dentistry gain salience and relevance under stressful conditions (i.e. when they are most needed).

In the present study, emotional labour (emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands) is regarded as the job demand. It thus can be hypothesised that emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands experienced by the call centre agents will amplify the impact of job resources and personal resources on the employees' work engagement. The following hypotheses can be formulated concerning the positive effect that job demands has on the relationship between job and personal resources and work engagement.

Hypothesis 16: Emotion-rule dissonance (ξ_3) has a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between transformational leadership ($\eta 4$) and work engagement ($\eta 1$).

Hypothesis 17: Emotional demands (ξ_2) have a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between transformational leadership ($\eta 4$) and work engagement ($\eta 1$).

Hypothesis 18: Emotion-rule dissonance (ξ_3) has a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence (ξ_1) and work engagement ($\eta 1$).

Hypothesis 19: Emotional demands (ξ_2) have a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence (ξ_1) and work engagement ($\eta 1$).

Hypothesis 20: Emotion-rule dissonance ($\xi 3$) has a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between psychological capital ($\xi 4$) and work engagement ($\eta 1$).

Hypothesis 21: Emotional demands (ξ_2) have a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between psychological capital (ξ_4) and work engagement (η_1).

Taking the two interaction effects into consideration, it became apparent that it is important to investigate the multiplicative impact of demands and resources to get a complete understanding of the emergence of burnout and engagement. Because employees never experience work overload in isolation without having some kind of support or interaction with their supervisor, it is sensible to examine combinations of work characteristics when explaining the experience of job burnout and work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

2.6 THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The conceptual model, illustrated by Figure 2.2, represents the latent variables, the inter-relationships between them, as well as the 21 formulated hypotheses.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter began with a discussion of the JD-R model, after which the model and its components were described as part of an in-depth literature review. The theoretical foundations of the constructs were also discussed in detail. An explanation of the different relationships between the constructs followed, and the study's hypotheses were stated. Lastly, the two interaction effects were described together with the relevant hypotheses. The research-initiating question that culminated from the literature review and relevant theory therefore asks: "Why is there variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit amongst employees in call centres?" The next chapter will present the methodology that was used to conduct the research and to investigate the stated hypotheses.

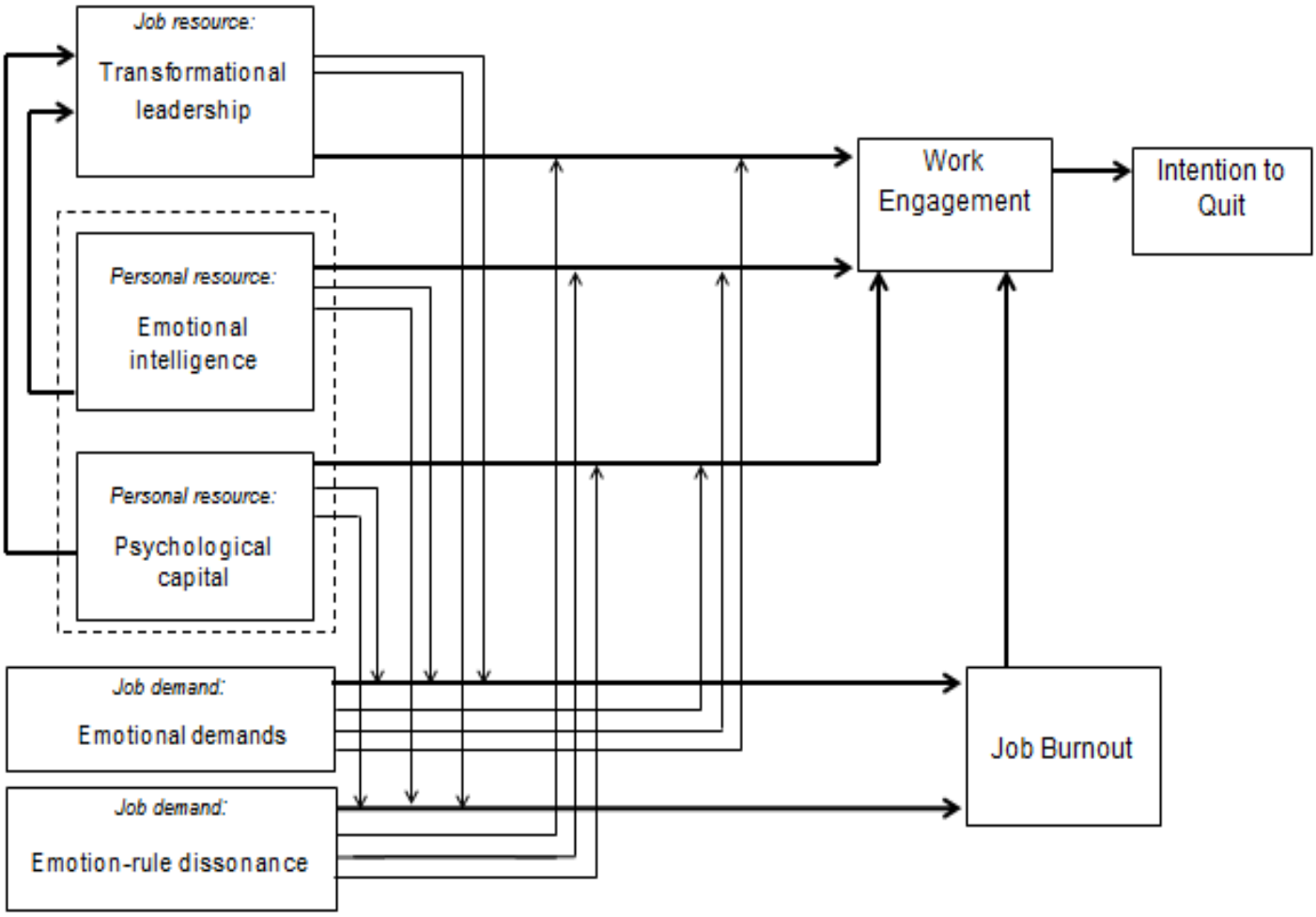

Figure 2.2. **Conceptual model**

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the literature review, the purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology applied throughout the research process to gain answers to the research-initiating question:

"Why is there variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit amongst employees in call centres?"

The research methodology should purposefully serve the epistemic ideal, i.e. the search for truthful knowledge (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). According to Theron (2014), the validity and credibility of the explanations derived from the proposed model are dependent on the method of inquiry used to arrive at the explanations. The probability of uncovering valid and credible verdicts therefore is a function of the methodology used. Science is committed to an epistemic imperative to search for valid

reasons. These reasons can be reflected as valid (or permissible) to the degree that the explanation closely fits the available data (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The scientific method, as the method of inquiry, serves the epistemic ideal through the control mechanisms of rationality as well as objectivity (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Before addressing the methodology utilised in this research study, it is advisable to revisit the study objectives (Nell, 2012). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the main objective of this study was to develop and empirically test a structural model (based on the current literature) that explains the antecedents of variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit amongst call centre employees (based on the JD-R model). Furthermore, the research study aimed to:

- Identify the most salient antecedents of variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit among call centre agents;
- As a consequence, propose and test an explanatory engagement, burnout and intention to quit structural model; and

- Highlight the results and managerial implications of the research findings and recommend practical interventions to the call centres that could increase work engagement and decrease the level of burnout and intention to quit amongst the call centre agents

This chapter focuses on the tools and procedures utilised in the present study. The research design chosen for the study will be described, followed by a discussion of the selected participants and relevant sample. The measurement instruments used in the current study will also be discussed. Particular attention will be paid to the validity and reliability of the separate measurements. In conclusion, data collection and data capturing will be explained, followed by a discussion of the statistical analysis that was conducted.

3.2 SUBSTANTIVE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The positivistic interpretation of scientific research insists that substantive hypotheses should be subjected to empirical testing. This implies that, if a scientist holds a particular belief that something is indeed so, then this belief must be checked against objective reality (i.e. the belief must be subjected to empirical testing) (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). However, in order to empirically test this belief, the scientist needs to make known what it is what he/she believes. This highlights the importance of hypotheses, which represent tentative predictions/ propositions about the relationship between two or more phenomena or variables. In other words, formulating and clearly stating hypotheses is an essential part of science in that it allows the scientist to empirically test his/her beliefs. Kerlinger and Lee (2000, p. 34) state that "it is hard to conceive modern science in all its rigorous and disciplined fertility without the guiding light and power of hypotheses".

The proposed JD-R structural model presented in Figure 3.1 schematically portrays the hypotheses developed through theorising in Chapter 2. These hypotheses, formulated in terms of latent variables, are substantive research hypotheses. Strictly speaking, substantive research hypotheses are not testable. Substantive research hypotheses must first be translated into operational terms. However, developing substantive research hypotheses through theorising is an essential first step towards the empirical testing of the proposed JD-R structural model.

Hypothesis 1: Job burnout ($\eta 2$) has a significant negative effect on work engagement ($\eta 1$) among call centre employees.

Hypothesis 2: Work engagement (η1) has a significant negative effect on intention to quit (η3) among call centre employees.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional demands (ξ2) have a significant positive effect on job burnout (η2) among call centre employees

Hypothesis 4: Emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) has a significant positive effect on job burnout (η2) among call centre employees.

Hypothesis 5: Transformational leadership (η4) has a significant positive effect on work engagement (η1) among call centre employees.

Hypothesis 6: The emotional intelligence (ξ1) of the subordinates will have a significant positive effect on transformational leadership (η4).

Hypothesis 7: The subordinates' psychological capital (ξ4) has a significant positive effect on transformational leadership (η4).

Hypothesis 8: Emotional intelligence (ξ1) has a positive effect on work engagement (η1) among call centre employees.

Hypothesis 9: Psychological capital (ξ4) has a positive effect on work engagement (η1) among call centre employees.

Hypothesis 10: Transformational leadership (η4) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 11: Transformational leadership (η4) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotional demands (ξ2) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 12: Emotional intelligence (ξ1) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 13: Emotional intelligence (ξ1) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotional demands (ξ2) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 14: Psychological capital (ξ4) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 15: Psychological capital (ξ4) has a significant negative moderator effect on the relationship between emotional demands (ξ2) and job burnout (η2).

Hypothesis 16: Emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) has a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between transformational leadership (η4) and work engagement (η1).

Hypothesis 17: Emotional demands (ξ2) have a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between transformational leadership (η4) and work engagement (η1).

Hypothesis 18: Emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) has a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence (ξ1) and work engagement (η1).

Hypothesis 19: Emotional demands (ξ2) have a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence (ξ1) and work engagement (η1).

Hypothesis 20: Emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) has a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between psychological capital (ξ4) and work engagement (η1).

Hypothesis 21: Emotional demands (ξ2) have a significant positive moderator effect on the relationship between psychological capital (ξ4) and work engagement (η1).

3.3 THE STRUCTURAL MODEL

The literature study presented above culminates in a structural model, which is a schematic representation of the hypotheses that have been constructed as an answer to the research-initiating question through theorising. Once the latent variables are operationalised, the model allows for the formulation and empirical testing of specific hypotheses. The proposed structural model is depicted in Figure 3.1.

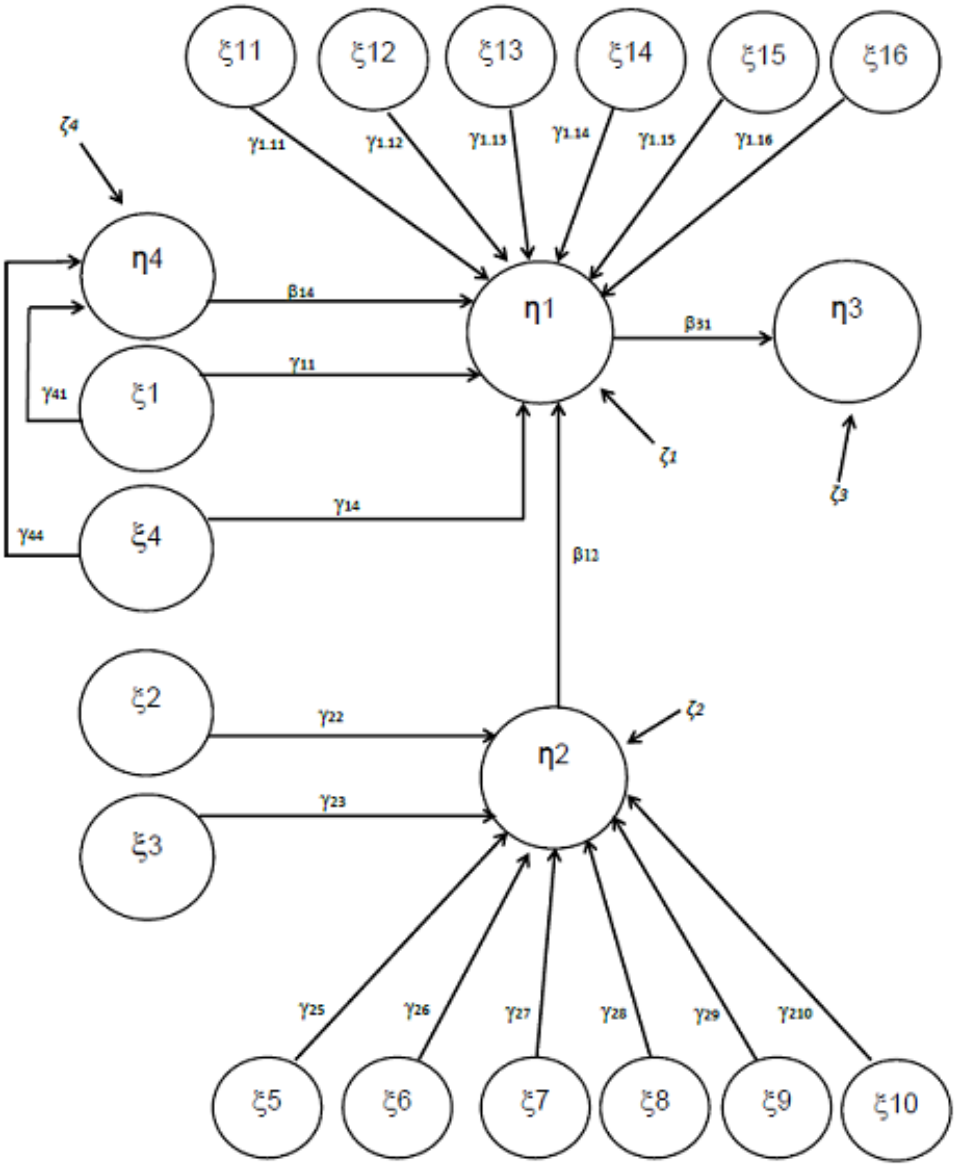

Figure 3. **Structural model**

When the conceptual mode (Figure 2.2) is compared with the structural model (Figure 3.1), it becomes obvious that there are some differences. Additional variables can be seen in Figure 3.1, which represent the *dummy* variables. The way to test a moderating effect in SEM is to create a separate variable. This is done by multiplying the score of the moderating variable with the score of the 'independent' variable that is hypothesised to influence the 'dependent' variable (Little, Bovaird & Widaman, 2006).

The moderating variable (indicated by "*" in Table 3.1) consequently becomes a dummy variable that directly influences the endogenous variable.

Table 3.1

Summary of Latent Variables

η1	**Work engagement**
η2	Job burnout
η3	Intention to quit
η4	Transformational leadership
ξ1	Emotional intelligence
ξ2	Emotional demands
ξ3	Emotion-rule dissonance
ξ4	Psychological capital
ξ5	Transformational leadership*emotion-rule dissonance *influences job burnout*
ξ6	Transformational leadership*emotional demands *influences job burnout*
ξ7	Emotional intelligence*emotion-rule dissonance *influences job burnout*
ξ8	Emotional intelligence*emotional demands *influences job burnout*
ξ9	Psychological capital*emotion-rule dissonance *influences job burnout*
ξ10	Psychological capital*emotional demands *influences job burnout*

ξ11	Emotion-rule dissonance*transformational leadership *influences work engagement*
ξ12	Emotional demands*transformational leadership *influences work engagement*
ξ13	Emotion-rule dissonance*emotional intelligence *influences work engagement*
ξ14	Emotional demands*emotional intelligence *influences work engagement*
ξ15	Emotion-rule dissonance*psychological capital *influences work engagement*
ξ16	Emotional demands*psychological capital *influences work engagement*

3.4 STATISTICAL HYPOTHESES

The statistical hypotheses presented in this section are a representation of the logic underlying the structural model, the research design, and the nature of the statistical analysis techniques associated with an *ex post facto* correlational design (Theron, 2014). The statistical analysis technique appropriate for the analysis of data from an *ex post facto* correlational design is *Structural Equation Modelling* (SEM) (Nell, 2012). Below are the statistical hypotheses that can be correlated with the formulated hypotheses in Chapter 2. The statistical hypotheses were formulated using the structural model depicted in Figure 3.1.

Hypothesis 1a*:*

- H_{01}: $\beta_{12} = 0$

  H_{a1}: $\beta_{12} < 0$

Hypothesis 2:

- H_{02}: $\beta_{31} = 0$

  H_{a2}: $\beta_{31} < 0$

Hypothesis 3:

- H_{03}: $\gamma_{22} = 0$
- H_{a3}: $\gamma_{22} > 0$

Hypothesis 4:

- H_{04}: $\gamma_{23} = 0$
- $H_{a4)}$: $\gamma_{23} > 0$

Hypothesis 5:

- H_{05}: $\beta_{14} = 0$

  H_{a5}: $\beta_{14} > 0$

Hypothesis 6:

- H_{06}: $\gamma_{41} = 0$

  H_{a6}: $\gamma_{41} > 0$

Hypothesis 7:

- H_{07}: $\gamma_{44} = 0$

  H_{a7}: $\gamma_{44} > 0$

Hypothesis 8:

- H_{08}: $\gamma_{11} = 0$

  H_{a8}: $\gamma_{11} > 0$

Hypothesis 9:

- H_{09}: $\gamma_{14} = 0$

  H_{a9}: $\gamma_{14} > 0$

Hypothesis 10:

- H_{010}: $\gamma_{25} = 0$

  H_{a10}: $\gamma_{25} < 0$

Hypothesis 11:

- H_{011}: $\gamma_{26} = 0$

  H_{a11}: $\gamma_{26} < 0$

Hypothesis 12:

- H_{012}: $\gamma_{27} = 0$

  H_{a12}: $\gamma_{27} < 0$

Hypothesis 13:

- H_{013}: $\gamma_{28} = 0$

$H_{a13}: \gamma_{28} < 0$

Hypothesis 14:

- $H_{014}: \gamma_{29} = 0$

  $H_{a14}: \gamma_{29} < 0$

Hypothesis 15:

- $H_{015}: \gamma_{2.10} = 0$

  $H_{a15}: \gamma_{2.10} < 0$

Hypothesis 16:

- $H_{016}: \gamma_{1.11} = 0$

  $H_{a16}: \gamma_{1.11} > 0$

Hypothesis 17:

- $H_{017}: \gamma_{1.12} = 0$

  $H_{a17}: \gamma_{1.12} > 0$

Hypothesis 18:

- $H_{018}: \gamma_{1.13} = 0$

  $H_{a18}: \gamma_{1.13} > 0$

Hypothesis 19:

- $H_{019}: \gamma_{1.14} = 0$

  $H_{a19}: \gamma_{1.14} > 0$

Hypothesis 20:

- $H_{020}: \gamma_{1.15} = 0$

  $H_{a20}: \gamma_{1.15} > 0$

Hypothesis 21:

- $H_{021}: \gamma_{1.16} = 0$

  $H_{a21}: \gamma_{1.16} > 0$

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design can be defined as the plan and structure of investigation that is created in order to obtain answers to research questions. The research design that is used to test the merit of the overarching and specific research hypotheses should be able to provide unambiguous scientific evidence to these questions (De Villiers, 2012). It is important to justify the choice of research design, as the whole purpose of the scientific methodology is to achieve valid conclusions in relation to the truth of the hypotheses that are being studied (Theron, 2014). The design is not randomly chosen. It is a product of the type of research-initiating question, the research problem, as well as the empirical evidence required to test the hypotheses (Theron, 2014). The research design, as part of the methodology, serves the epistemic ideal of science through the control mechanisms of rationality and objectivity (Theron, 2014).

A cross-sectional study was used to collect data from the selected sample of call centre agents in order to make inferences about possible relationships and to gather data to support further or previously done research.

The research design that was used in this study was a non-experimental *ex post facto* correlational design. According to Theron (2014), this type of design is utilised when the relationships between variables are observed without any form of manipulation and/or control. This may be due to the fact that (1) the researcher is not able to control or manipulate the variables, or (2) the manifestation of the phenomena has already occurred. In short, participants are not randomly assigned and variables are not manipulated.

Whenever one chooses a research design, it is important to take into consideration the limitations associated with it. There are three shortcomings regarding the *ex post facto* correlational design. Firstly, no manipulation of independent variables can be done, there is a lack of power to randomise and, thirdly, there is a risk that one may interpret results in an improper manner (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Despite the shortcomings of the *ex post facto* correlational design, it is still a valuable research design to use. This design adds value in the fact that most research on variables in the field of industrial psychology and other social sciences cannot be manipulated. In this case, *ex post facto* correlational design would be much more preferable than experimental design, in which manipulation is usually done.

Through the researcher's efforts and the use of certain techniques, the *ex post facto correlational design* is able to maximise systematic error variance, control for extraneous

variance as well as minimise error variance (Theron, 2014). Therefore, this design has the capacity to increase the likelihood of providing unambiguous empirical evidence against which hypotheses are tested.

3.6 RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND SAMPLING SIZE

Sampling involves the selection of a sub-set, or segment, of the total population (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the target population was call centre agents employed at a specific call centre situated in Cape Town, South Africa.[10] It is an international call centre company; however, the present study will only focus on two branches situated in Bellville and Century City, Cape Town. The study was conducted in the outbound departments, as it was found that their turnover rates were much higher than the call centre's inbound departments.

A senior HR manager and registered psychologist employed at the call centre were approach to discuss the possibility of collecting data for the study. After the initial discussion, a PowerPoint presentation was presented to a group working in the HR department in order to get their approval as well. After the HR group accepted the final proposal, an informed consent form was submitted, after which Stellenbosch University granted ethical clearance. The operational managers of the selected departments in the two call centres were approached, as they had to invite and motivate the call centre agents of their specific departments to participate in the study.

Furthermore, the researcher had to decide on a specific sampling technique. Struwig and Stead (2001) state that sampling identification can be done with either one of two techniques, namely *probability* (i.e. random, stratified, cluster and systematic sampling) or *non-probability sampling* (i.e. quota, purposive, convenience/availability sampling).

In probability sampling, each element in the sampling population has a known, but not necessarily equal, probability of being selected for the sample. On the other hand, non-probability sampling refers to those sampling procedures in which the probability of selection is unknown for each element of the sampling population. Probability samples are considered preferable, but are not always practical or feasible (Salkind, 2010).

In the current study, non-probability sampling was used. More specifically, a convenience sampling design was employed, which refers to a sampling procedure of using individuals

[10] The company wishes to stay anonymous.

who are readily available (Salkind, 2010). Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that non-probability convenience sampling consists of the selection of subjects based on their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. It was decided on this technique due to organisational time constraints (limited time for data collection and research endeavours on the part of the call centre), as well as practical limitations (the survey was handed out as a paper copy due to the fact that many call centre agents did not have access to the internet at home). No pressure was placed on the call centre agents to complete the questionnaires, but the operational managers of each department were encouraged to motivate their agents to participate in the study in order to get the highest possible response rate. In the end, a final sample of 223 from the two specific call centres completed the questionnaire. However, there are a total of 800 call centre agents employed in the different departments on which the study focused, which resulted in a response rate of 28%. Table 3.2 provides a summary of the biographical information of the sample.

3.7 MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

Every latent variable within the structural model needs to be measured by an instrument that is able to provide empirical evidence against which hypotheses can be tested. However, to come to valid and reliable conclusions using the obtained results, the instruments utilised need to possess the necessary psychometric qualities. The measurement instruments operationalise the constructs by making them measureable. Diamantopoulos and Siguaw (2000, p. 89) agree with this by explaining that, "unless we can trust the quality of our measurements, then any assessment of the substantive relations of interest will be problematic".

A composite questionnaire was compiled that consisted of questions from different existing questionnaires. The composite self-administered questionnaire consisted of eight sections. The first section dealt with the biographical information of the participants. Sections two to eight measured the relevant variables. Seven validated questionnaires were utilised to measure the constructs for the purpose of this study.

The seven measurement models used will now be discussed, including the nature, composition and psychometric properties of the instruments. These seven instruments are (1) the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) questionnaire (Schaufeli et al., 2002), (2) the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS) (Maslach et al., 2001), (3) the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) (Ding & Lin, 2006; Lee, 2000), (4) the Emotional Demands

and Emotion-rule Dissonance scales (Xanthopoulou et al., 2013), (5) the adapted Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5x short) (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009), (6) the Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory (Gignac, 2010) and (7) the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (Luthans et al., 2007).

3.7.1 Biographical information

A biographical section was included in the questionnaire. This was used to gather information about the demographic characteristics of the call centre participants (including age, gender, ethnic group, years of experience, company tenure, and educational level).

Table 3.2

Biographical Information of the Sample Population (N = 223)

Age		
Minimum; Maximum	*Mean*	*Standard deviation*
Under 20; 60+	30	7.8
Gender		
Variables	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Male	81	36%
Female	142	64%
Ethnic group		
Variables	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
African	39	17.5%
White	33	15%
Asian	2	1%
Coloured	139	62%
Indian	10	4.5%

Years of experience		
Variables	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Less than a year	32	14.5%
One year but less than two years	39	17.5%
Two to five years	83	37%
More than five years	27	12%
No experience	42	19%
Company tenure		
Variables	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Less than a year	93	42%
One year but less than two years	67	30%
Two to five years	56	25%
More than five years	7	3%
Education		
Variables	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
Primary school	1	.5%
High school	151	68%
Diploma	61	27%
Degree	9	4%
Honours degree	0	0%
Master's degree	1	.5%

3.7.2 Utrecht Work Engagement Scale questionnaire (UWES-17)

3.7.2.1 Description of the instrument

There are several instruments to measure *work engagement*. The most well-known is a self-report questionnaire, called the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) (Schaufeli et al., 2002). This scale was designed predominantly to measure the individual's level of employee engagement in his/her work. It can also be used to determine the relationship between engagement, burnout and workaholism, as well as possible causes and consequences of engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Ultimately, the primary focus of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale is to determine, improve and regulate employee wellness in the work environment. The UWES includes the three constituting aspects of work engagement, namely vigour, dedication and absorption, as previously mentioned. By determining each employee's score on these three items, organisations can incorporate this information in their human resource planning in order to have employees in positions where they are productive and comfortable and where the elements of the job complement their personality and personal resources (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

The three components are scored on a seven-point frequency rating scale, varying from 0 ("never") to 6 ("always/daily") (Schaufeli et al., 2002), and have been validated in many countries. It takes an employee between five and ten minutes to complete this test, which consists of statements regarding the individual's work. The UWES is administered in paper and pencil format, or it can be distributed electronically and completed on a computer, conducted individually or in a group (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

Attridge (2009) states that, in order to measure an employee's work engagement using the UWES, it is important to start with the individual-level scores, which eventually can be used to measure the group-level work engagement in the organisation as a whole. High scores can be interpreted as high levels of vigour, dedication and absorption, while low scores represent the opposite (Timms et al., 2012).

Originally, the UWES questionnaire comprised 24 items, in which vigour items (nine), dedication items (eight) and absorption items (seven) were included. After psychometric evaluation in two different samples of employees and students, seven items appeared to be unsound and were subsequently removed, leaving 17 items. These seventeen items included

six vigour items, five dedication items and six absorption items. This gave rise to a 17-item version of the UWES questionnaire. The scoring keys for the UWES questionnaire are as follows:

Vigour is tested in questions 1, 4, 8, 12, 15 and 17. All the questions regarding vigour are scored positively. Scoring high on questions 1, 4, 8, 12, 15 and 17 should provide an individual with a high score in vigour.

Dedication is tested in questions 2, 5, 7, 10 and 13. All the questions regarding dedication are scored positively. Scoring high on questions 2, 5, 7, 10 and 13 should provide an individual with a high score in dedication.

Absorption is tested in questions 3, 6, 9, 11, 14 and 16. All the questions regarding absorption are scored positively. Scoring high on questions 3, 6, 9, 11, 14 and 16 should provide an individual with a high score in absorption.

As stated previously, De Bruin et al. (2013) indicate that work engagement should be treated as an unidimensional construct: individual scores should be interpreted in a summative manner, giving a single global score.

3.7.2.2 Previous findings on the psychometric properties of the UWES-17

The UWES has been translated into many languages and used among many different occupational groups (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). When focusing on the reliability of the UWES scales developed for other languages, one would look at two aspects respectively: (1) internal consistency (α) and (2) test-retest reliability. The internal consistencies of the UWES-17 are provided in Table 3.3 below, together with the shorter UWES questionnaires' internal consistencies (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

Table 3.3

***Cronbach's alphas for UWES Scales for the Other Language Versions (Adapted from the UWES Manual)* (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003)**

	UWES-9 (N = 12 631)			**UWES-15 (N = 12 631)**			**UWES-17 (N = 12 631)**		
	Total	Md	Range	Total	Md	Range	Total	Md	Range
Vigour	.72	.76	.60 - .87	.80	.80	.56 – .88	.82	.82	.66 – .87

Dedication	.84	.87	.74 – .90	.89	.89	.83 – .92	.89	.89	.83 – .92
Absorption	.77	.79	.66 – .85	.81	.82	.73 – .88	.83	.83	.79 – .88
TOTAL	**.90**	**.91**	**.85 – .94**	**.92**	**.94**	**.88 – .96**	**.93**	**.93**	**.88 – .95**

It is clear from the table above that the internal consistencies for both the long and the shorter versions are satisfactory. Cronbach's alphas will increase as the length of the test increases, consequently the UWES-17 version will have a higher alpha than UWES-9.

When focusing on test-retest reliability, which was assessed using 563 Norwegian paramedics and 292 Australian Salvation Army officers (Schaufeli et al., 2002), it was found that vigour was more stable over time and that the length of the test did not influence the stability of the test. Moreover, according to Seppala et al. (2009), confirmatory factor analysis supported the hypothesised correlated three-factor structure, namely vigour, dedication and absorption, of both the UWES-9 and UWES-17 scales.

3.7.3 Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS)

3.7.3.1 Description of the instrument

For more than a decade, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) has been one of the leading measures for *burnout* (Lamb, 2009). Burnout, as explained earlier, is a syndrome that occurs among individuals who work with other people in some way or another (Maslach et al., 2001) involving reduced personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Campbell and Rothman (2005) stated in their study that the original Maslach Burnout Inventory was composed of 47 items. Subsequent research reduced the number of items to 25 and eventually to a final form of 22 items, known as the MBI-General Survey (MBI-GS).

The MBI-General Survey is a new version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory designed for workers in occupations other than human services or education. The levels of burnout of the employees working in these occupations are measured separately by the MBI-Human Service survey and the MBI-Educator survey respectively (Maslach et al., 2001). The MBI-General Survey is a 22-item instrument that measures the three aspects of burnout discussed below.

The MBI-GS is an affective behaviour assessment that can be administered to a group or individually. The 22 items are scored on a seven-point frequency rating scale, varying from 0

("never") to 6 ("every day"). The survey consists of sections A, B and C. Section A measures the level of emotional exhaustion, section B measures the level of depersonalisation and section C measures the level of personal accomplishment. These three sections consist of nine, five and eight questions respectively (Maslach et al., 2001).

The scoring keys for the burnout questionnaire are as follows:

- Emotional exhaustion is tested in questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16 and 20. All the questions regarding emotional exhaustion are scored positively. Scoring high on these questions should provide an individual with a high score in emotional exhaustion.
- Depersonalisation is tested in questions 5, 10, 11, 15 and 21. All the questions regarding depersonalisation are scored negatively. Scoring high on these questions should provide an individual with a high score in depersonalisation.
- Personal accomplishment is tested in questions 4, 7, 9, 12, 17, 18, 19 and 21. All the questions regarding personal accomplishment are scored negatively. Scoring low on these questions should provide an individual with a high score in personal accomplishment.

However, the present study will treat job burnout as an unidimensional construct and therefore focus on the *total* job burnout score.

3.7.3.2 Previous findings on the psychometric properties of the Maslach Burnout Inventory

The reliability of the Maslach Burnout Inventory has been recognised to be acceptable in numerous South African studies (Van den Berg et al., 2006). The reliability coefficients were found to be .90 for emotional exhaustion, .71 for personal accomplishment and .79 for depersonalisation (Maslach et al, 2001). The MBI-GS was also assessed in Roger and Campbell and Rothman's (2005) study, which resulted in a positive outcome with internal consistencies of .89 for emotional exhaustion, .84 for cynicism and .84 for professional efficacy. The subscales of the Maslach Inventory-General Survey thus, once again, showed acceptable results, as they were above the acceptable value of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1999).

According to Lamb (2009), the validity of the Maslach Burnout Inventory is well established. The results of a series of confirmatory factor analyses established the three-factor structure for eight diverse occupations. The three-factor model fits the data for each of the eight groups correspondingly well, suggesting that exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy

constitute three independent dimensions of burnout, independent of vocational aspects. These findings indicate that the MBI-GS is a measure of burnout that can be used in any occupational context (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2002). Maslach et al. (2001) also state that convergent and discriminant validity were demonstrated in a number of ways.

3.7.4 Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-5)

3.7.4.1 Description of the instrument

An employee's intention to quit the company can be regarded as the final cognitive step in the decision-making process of voluntary turnover (Dhladhla, 2011). The intention to quit therefore can be described as an individual's behavioural intention to leave the organisation (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Hence, it is of great importance for managers to identify the contributing factors of the employee's intention to quit and consequently prevent turnover in advance.

The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) was used to measure the respondents' turnover intentions in call centres. Due to the absence of well-developed and validated scales for measuring the employees' intention to quit their organisations, an additional five-item scale (Turnover Intention Scale) was developed to measure the respondents' intentions. Most of the previous studies on turnover intention have a tendency to use one or two items to measure turnover intention among employees. The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) for this study was developed from the combination of modified items that were adapted from previous studies (Ding & Lin, 2006; Lee, 2000). The TIS items are rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). All the items are positively worded and require no reflection at a later stage (Dhladhla, 2011).

3.7.4.2 Previous findings on the psychometric properties of the TIS-5

The turnover intention scale comprises five items, and is also item analysed. Dhladhla (2011) reports that the TIS showed high internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .89$).

3.7.5 Emotional demands and emotion-rule dissonance scales

3.7.5.1 Description of the instrument

Emotional labour concerns the management of emotions at work in order to meet organisational or job-related display rules and, as such, it requires effort. Emotional labour is measured by *emotional demands* and *emotion-rule dissonance*. Emotional demands are measured with the six-item scale of Bakker et al. (2003). The participants respond on a five-point scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 5 ("always"). Emotion-rule dissonance, on the other

hand, is assessed with five items based on the study by Zapf, Mertini, Seifert, Vogt, Isic and Fischbach (2000). These items are also rated on a five-point scale (1 = "never", 5 = "always").

3.7.5.2 Previous findings on the psychometric properties of the emotional demands and emotion-rule dissonance scales

According to Xanthopoulou et al. (2013), both scales showed acceptable reliabilities, with emotional demands α = .79 and emotion-rule dissonance α = .82.

3.7.6 The adapted Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

3.7.6.1 Description of the instrument

The adapted Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5x-Short) (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009) was used to measure the respondents' perceptions of their supervisors' leadership behaviours, looking into *transformational leadership*. This questionnaire is an adapted version of the original MLQ, which the researcher struggled to find. The adapted MLQ also consists of strong psychometric properties, which contribute to the fact that the measurement is the most widely used instrument for measuring transformational leadership. The adapted MLQ consist of 20 items (Avey, Hughes, Norman, & Luthans, 2008). The items measure the frequency with which the participants perceived their supervisors to display a range of transformational leadership behaviours, and are measured on a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = "almost never", 6 = "almost always"). The transformational leadership scale consists of four subscales that measure transformational leadership behaviours, namely idealised influence (eight items), inspirational motivation (four items), intellectual stimulation (four items), and individualised consideration (four items) (Barling et al., 2000).

The scoring keys for this questionnaire are as follows:

- Idealised influence is tested in questions 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, and 19;
- Inspirational motivation is tested in question 5, 7, 14, and 20;
- Intellectual stimulation is tested in question 2, 4, 16, and 18; and
- Individualised consideration is tested in questions 9, 11, 15, and 17

The researcher had to bear in mind that all 20 questions within the adapted MLQ are scored positively. Moreover, the present study treated transformational labour as a unidimensional construct and therefore focused on the *total* score.

3.7.6.2 Previous findings on the psychometric properties of the adapted MLQ

Each subscale of the adapted MLQ yielded an internal reliability alpha larger than .70. Intellectual stimulation had an internal reliability of .83, intellectual consideration .88, idealised influence .92 and inspirational motivation .90 (Avey et al., 2008).

3.7.7 Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory

3.7.7.1 Description of the instrument

Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to purposefully adapt, shape and select environments using emotionally relevant processes (Gignac, 2010). The Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory was used to measure the employees' emotional intelligence in the present study. There are three versions of Genos EI questionnaires, namely (1) Genos EI–Short: 14 items; (2) Genos EI–Concise: 31 items and (3) Genos EI–Full: 70 items.

Each version exists in both self-report and rater-report format. The short version of Genos EI yields only a total score. The concise and full versions yield seven subscale scores and one total EI score. The concise version is recommended for research scenarios where a total EI score is of principal interest and there are some exploratory type hypotheses related to one or more of the individual seven dimensions. If there are primary hypotheses relevant to one or more of the seven dimensions, then the full version is recommended. Hence, the present study used the *concise version*.

It takes the respondents approximately 12 to 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The items are scored on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "almost never" to "almost always". The inventory can produce an inconsistency index score, two socially desirable responding scores, a total EI score, and seven subscale scores. The names of the seven EI subscales are: (1) Emotional Self-Awareness (ESA); (2) Emotional Expression (EE); (3) Emotional Awareness of Others (EAO); (4) Emotional Reasoning (ER); (5) Emotional Self-Management (ESM); (6) Emotional Management of Others (EMO); and (7) Emotional Self-Control (ESC) (Gignac, 2010).

The scoring keys for the Genos EI–Concise are as follows:

- Emotional self-awareness (ESA) is tested in questions 2*, 4*, 24, 28.
- Emotional expression (EE) is tested in questions 5*, 7, 9, 18, 29*
- Emotional awareness of others (EAO) is tested in questions 11*, 12, 19, 22*
- Emotional reasoning (ER) is tested in questions 1, 8, 15, 16 17

- Emotional self-management (ESM) is tested in questions 3, 6*, 13*, 20, 21
- Emotional Management of Others (EMO): 14, 25, 27*, 31*
- Emotional self-control (ESC) is tested in questions 10*, 23*, 26, 30

* Item that needs to be reverse coded prior to calculating scale scores.

The present study focused on the *total* emotional intelligence score. The total EI score is based on an equally weighted composite of the seven Genos EI dimensions defined above. Thus, the total EI score represents the frequency with which an individual engages in a diverse variety of EI behaviours relevant to the identification of emotions (of the self and others), the reasoning with emotions, and the general management of emotions (self, others, and emotional control).

3.7.7.2 Previous findings on the psychometric properties of the Genos EI inventory

The Genos EI–Concise version includes a total EI score and the same seven subscales that comprise the 70-item full version. However, the reliabilities associated with the Concise subscale scores tend to be lower than those of the corresponding full version. Thus, the Genos EI–Concise version should only be used for research purposes or possibly educational/developmental purposes. Although the subscale reliabilities tend to be lower within the Concise version, they are nonetheless above .70.

3.7.8 Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ)

3.7.8.1 Description of the instrument

The psychological capital questionnaire (Luthans et al., 2007) was used to measure the individual's psychological capital, comprising four subscales (hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy). The PCQ is a self-report questionnaire and consists of 24 items; each subscale is assessed by six items. All the responses for the PCQ are anchored on a six-point Likert scale, with the response options 1 = "strongly disagree", 2 = "disagree", 3 = "somewhat disagree", 4 = "somewhat agree", 5 = "agree", 6 = "strongly agree". Psychological capital includes statements such as: 'At the present time I am energetically pursuing my goals' (hope); 'I am optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work' (optimism); 'I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work' (resilience); and 'I feel confident helping to set targets/goals in my work area' (self-efficacy).

The scoring keys for the PCQ are as follows:

- Items 1 to 6 are the self-efficacy subscale,
- Items 7 to 12 are the hope subscale,
- Items 13 to 18 are the resilience subscales, and
- Items 19 to 24 are the optimism subscales.

The scoring for psychological capital is just the total points, but the researcher had to bear in mind that items 13, 20 and 23 are reverse scored.

It was found that psychological capital as a core construct has predictive value above and beyond the first-order latent variables (hope, efficacy, resiliency and optimism). Therefore, this study focused on the effect of psychological capital as a whole.

3.7.8.2 Previous findings on the psychometric properties of the PCQ

According to Simons and Buitendach (2013), the reliability coefficient for the psychological capital questionnaire was .91, and for the constructs of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy it was .76, .72, .90 and .87 respectively. Luthans and Youssef (2010) published established scales that had been tested and used in recent workplace situations. The Cronbach's alphas reported in their study were as follows: hope .87; optimism .78; resilience .72; and self-efficacy .87. Acceptable reliability coefficients have been reported in South African samples for the four dimensions, with the alpha coefficients ranging from .67 to .83 (Simons & Buitendach, 2013). Luthans et al. (2008) reported that the PCQ demonstrated reliability as well as construct validity. Luthans, Avolio, Avey and Norman (2007) confirmed the validity of the PCQ in their study.

3.8 MISSING VALUES

The occurrence of missing values will need to be addressed before the data can be analysed statistically. The number of missing values, as well as the nature of the data, especially whether the data follows a multivariate normality, will determine the method to utilise. The likelihood to chance upon missing values is great when survey data is used. This is due to absenteeism and/or non-response of participants and can have a large influence on the indicator variables if not dealt with before the statistical analysis of the data. Methods to rectify the problems associated with missing values range from data deletion (list-wise deletion or pair-wise deletion) to data imputation (multiple imputations, imputation by matching, and full information maximum likelihood imputation) (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996).

In this study, several participants (N = 9) did not complete major parts of the questionnaire. The fact that the questionnaire had to be given out as a paper copy created the potential for participants to leave out parts of or not complete the questionnaire. Consequently, the researcher used list-wise deletion (deletion of the participant's entire record) to deal with this type of missing data. Not one of the 9 participants' datasets was included in the study. Moreover, two participants did not complete the entire survey (one participant left out some questions in the psychological capital section, and two participants each left out some questions in the work engagement section). This missing data was dealt with by means of pair-wise deletion, where the researcher omits the specific missing values from the analysis (not the entire case). In other words, all available data was included in the analysis, while the statistical software program recognised the missing values and took them into account.

3.9 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

3.9.1 Data analysis

The selection of data analysis techniques is dependent on the type of research questions the study is aiming to answer. The data in this study was analysed by means of quantitative techniques. All data collected from the measurement instruments was analysed by a number of different quantitative techniques. These techniques included *item analyses* and *structural equation modelling (SEM).* The objective of the data analysis is to test the structural model. A short explanation of the different quantitative techniques and programmes used in this study will be provided.

3.9.2 Computer package

Item analysis and partial least squares (PLS) analysis methods were used to analyse the collected data. Statistica version 12 was used to perform the item analyses in order to provide the reliabilities of the items and constructs. SmartPLS version 3 (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2014)) was used to test the relationships between the different variables, to provide the path coefficients between the variables and to estimate the PLS model.

3.9.3 Item analysis

A variety of scales can be used to test the latent variables. By using item analysis, an individual can increase his/her understanding of the validity and reliability of tests. A close examination of individual tests is critical to understand why some tests show specific levels of reliability and validity, and others not (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Each item of a measurement instrument measures a specific aspect of an individual. Consequently, it is

necessary that each measurement instrument include items that measure the actual latent variable or dimensions of the latent variable that are supposed to be measured. Each variable carries a specific constitutive definition, and each item that is used to measure a specific variable must be in line with the constitutive definition of the variable. The items of each instrument have been developed to indicate the participants' standing on the specific latent variable. The items in the questionnaires act as stimuli, with the aim to elicit the participants' responses in terms of the behaviour of the underlying constructs. The item responses therefore record the behaviour that underlies the construct and consequently make the behaviour "observable" in the form of data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

However, items can be poor at eliciting a response. Various ways exist in which items can be poor, namely they can be insensitive, inconsistent or portray a poor interpretation of the construct (Theron, 2014). A process called item analysis can be utilised to identify poor items through item statistics. The practice of item analysis is used to determine the quality and internal consistency reliability of the items of the respective scales. The literature suggests that reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas) of .70 or higher are sufficient (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Depending on the results of the item analysis and the nature of the poor items (if such items are present), the choice should be made whether to transform or delete the items from the instrument or respective scale(s) (Theron, 2014). If the overall reliability of an instrument or subscale shows significant improvement after the selected items have been deleted, they are excluded from subsequent analyses. Cronbach's alphas and average inter-item correlations for each subscale, as well as for the total scale, mainly were used for this purpose.

3.9.4 Structural equation modelling (SEM)

3.9.4.1 Partial least squares SEM analysis (PLS)

Partial least squares were utilised in the present study. PLS is a soft modelling approach and utilises partial least squares (PLS), in contrast with the hard modelling approach of SEM, which utilises maximum likelihood (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009).

The motivation for utilising PLS modelling is its exploration and prediction value, since PLS path modelling is recommended at an early stage of theoretical development in order to test and validate exploratory models. PLS path modelling has another advantage, as it is very suitable for prediction-orientated research. Therefore, PLS assists researchers focusing on the explanation of endogenous constructs (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009). Moreover, the

PLS approach is distribution free, thus the data is not required to be normally distributed (Chin, 1998). In other words, this method could accommodate both reflective and formative scales easily, which is in contrast to covariance structure analysis.

PLS models are formally defined as two sets of linear equations, namely the inner model and the outer model. The outer model analyses the relationships between latent variables and their observed or manifest variables. The inner model analyses the relationships between unobserved or latent variables (Henseler et al., 2009). The outer model in PLS can be compared to the measurement model used in SEM. The inner model in PLS can be compared to the structural model used in SEM.

Before the PLS model estimation can be done, a series of analyses need to take place (Charoensukmongkol, 2014). Firstly, the reliability of the latent variables was evaluated in order to estimate the measurement model fit. This was done by looking at the composite reliabilities, average variance distracted (AVE) and R-squared. If the coefficients exceed .70 they are regarded as satisfactory (Charoensukmongkol, 2014). After the systematic evaluation of the reliabilities of the latent variables, the PLS estimates reveal the measurement model reliability and validity according to certain criteria associated with the measurement model.

The structural model estimates need to be evaluated once the calculated latent variable scores show evidence for sufficient reliability and validity (Chin, 1998). The structural model relates latent variables to each other. In order to assess whether the main effect and interaction effect are significant, a bootstrapping sampling procedure was performed. After bootstrapping, the accuracy of the path estimates to the true effects was assessed. It is important to note that the estimates of the structural paths tend to be more accurate than the reliability score for the estimated construct increases (Chin, 1998).

Moderating effects are applicable to the current study and were analysed utilising PLS path modelling. The process can be explained in two steps: The process commences with an iterative process. This process is characterised by latent variable scores estimated for each latent variable. The latent variable scores were then entered as dependent and independent variables into one or more regressions. Owing to the nature of the second step, most of the recommendations for testing moderating effects in multiple regression hold for PLS path modelling as well. When the researcher mentions moderating effects, it is in the context of PLS path modelling, which means it is the moderating relationships within the structural

model. The researcher is interested in the moderating effect of latent variables on the direct relationships between latent variables (Henseler & Fassott, 2010).

3.10 RESEARCH ETHICS

The purpose of reflecting on potential ethical risks associated with the proposed research is to protect the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of the research participants involved in this study. The researcher had been made aware of professional codes of ethics and guidelines for ethically responsible research applicable to the current study.

The present study could be considered as a low-risk study. There were no serious potential risks or discomforts related to this study. However, one major concern was the anonymity of the participants, as well as of the company in which the study was conducted. The researcher did not want to negatively affect any current employees who participated in the study because of the results of the study. Therefore, keeping the answers and profiles of individuals anonymous was crucial. The individuals' anonymity was guaranteed, as only the researcher, the supervisor and the statistical analyst had access to the results, which were protected by a username and password. Also, any concerns participants might have had regarding possible negative repercussions after completing the self-rated questionnaire were addressed by assuring the confidentiality of the results. Furthermore, the call centre company was also kept anonymous. This was requested by the company from the onset.

The research participants had the right to decide voluntary whether they wished to accept the invitation to participate in the research. There was no forced completion of any survey. They made an informed decision on whether they wished to participate in the research. Once again, there was anonymity regarding who agreed and rejected the invitation to participate. Agreeing or disagreeing to participate would not benefit or disadvantage any individual.

In Annexure 12 of the Ethical Rules of Conduct for Practitioners Registered under the Health Professions Act (Act no. 56 of 1974) (Republic of South Africa, 2006) it is required of the researcher to enter into an agreement with participants on the nature of the research, the participants' responsibilities as well as those of the researcher. The participants therefore were informed about:

(1) the objectives and purpose of the research,

(2) what participation in the research would involve,

(3) how the research results would be disseminated and used,

(4) who the researcher is,
(5) what her affiliation is,
(6) where they can make further inquiries about the research if they wish to do so,
(7) what their rights as participants are, and
(8) where they can obtain more information on their research rights.

The agreement in terms of which the research participants provided informed consent met the following requirements according to Annexure 12 (Republic of South Africa, 2006):

(1) The researcher used language that was reasonably understandable to the research participant concerned in obtaining his/her informed consent.
(2) The informed consent was appropriately documented, and in obtaining such consent the researcher:
    (a) informed the participant of the nature of the research;
    (b) informed the participant that he/she was free to participate or decline to participate in or to withdraw from the research;
    (c) explained the foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing;
    (d) informed the participant of significant factors that could be expected to influence his/her willingness to participate;
    (e) explained any other matters about which the participant enquired.

However, the study also involved the assessment of critical latent variables in relation to which the possibility of unusually high or low scores (specifically with regard to participants' levels of job burnout) could signal serious threats to the well-being of the research participants. Annexure 12 of the Ethical Rules of Conduct for Practitioners Registered under the Health Professions Act (Act no. 56 of 1974) (Republic of South Africa, 2006) requires researchers to disclose confidential information under the following circumstances:

A psychologist researcher may disclose confidential information:

- only with the permission of the participant concerned;
- when permitted by law to do so for a legitimate purpose, such as providing a participant with the professional services required;
- to appropriate professionals and then for strictly professional purposes only; or
- to protect a participant or other persons from harm.

Therefore, the participants in the study were provided with the contact details of an appropriately qualified professional who could be contacted if they felt the need to do so. This, however, does not suggest that the researcher or institution had to be held responsible for the costs that could arise for treatment.

It therefore can be concluded that there were no major ethical threats posed by the study. The above procedures were introduced to ensure the protection and anonymity of the individuals. With these procedures in place, the researcher was confident that all ethical and legal requirements had been complied with.

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 3 provided a description of the methodological choices that were made throughout the research process to obtain answers to the research-initiating question and consequent hypotheses. In summary, an *ex post facto* correlational research design was used to collect primary data specifically for the purpose of this research study. Non-probability convenience sampling was used to select the sample. Quantitative data was collected from call centre agents in two call centre branches, situated in Bellville and Century City, by using a self-administered paper copy questionnaire. The following measures were used:

- Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003);
- Maslach Burnout Inventory General survey (MBI-GS) (Lamb, 2009);
- Emotional demands and emotion-rule dissonance scales (Bakker et al., 2003; Zapf et al., 2000);
- Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory (Gignac, 2010),
- Turnover intention scale (TIS-5) (Ding & Lin, 2006; Lee, 2000)
- Adapted Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Van Aswegen & Engelbrecht, 2009); and
- Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) (Luthans et al., 2007).

Item analysis and partial least squares (PLS) analysis methods were used to analyse the collected data. The next chapter presents the research findings derived from the statistical analyses and their interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the results that were obtained after analysing the data according to the statistical methods discussed in Chapter 3. Item analysis was used to find the reliability of the different measures that were used to measure the latent variables (intention to quit, work engagement, job burnout, transformational leadership, psychological capital, emotional intelligence, and emotional demands and emotion-rule dissonance). After item analysis was performed, PLS (SEM) was used to support the reliability of the different measurements and to confirm the fit of the measurement model. In addition, PLS (SEM) was utilised to analyse and investigate the relevant paths between the variables in order to confirm the structural model fit.

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the statistical results of the various analyses that were performed in this research study. Firstly, an item analysis was performed to determine the psychometric soundness of the measurement instruments that were used to represent the various latent variables. Thereafter, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted to evaluate the measurement model fit. After establishing an acceptable measurement model fit, a path analysis of the structural model was fitted to determine structural model fit. Selected paths were supplemented by regression and multiple regression analyses. Lastly, the final scores and hypotheses were interpreted.

4.2 VALIDATING THE MEASUREMENT MODEL

4.2.1 Item analysis

The item analysis provided a preliminary indication of the value of the subsequent statistical analyses. The validity and reliability criteria[11] normally depend on the nature of the constructs included in the study, whereas item correlations evaluate the consistency between items.[12] Item correlations are the subtype of internal consistency reliability.

[11] The validity and reliability criteria (Cronbach's alphas) adopted and applied in this study are considered satisfactorily, i.e. ≥ .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1999)

[12] Inter-item correlations are a subtype of internal consistency reliability. Values between 1.00 and > .50 are considered excellent. Values between .50 and > .00 indicate acceptable reliability (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Item analysis was performed for all items included in the questionnaire. A summary of the items measuring each sub-dimension of the constructs can be found in Table 4.1. The item analysis summary includes the mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha and average inter-item correlation of *all the items* that measure the specific latent variables (i.e. subscales). Table 4.2 provides a summary of the mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha and average inter-item correlation of all the *total scales.*

Table 4.1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Consistency Reliabilities of Subscales

Scale	Sample size	Number of items	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha	Average inter-item correlation
WE_vigor	223	6	23.35	6.14	.85	.50
WE_dedication	223	5	19.65	5.31	.85	.55
WE_absorption	223	6	22.8	5.85	.84	.47
JB_EE	223	9	26.96	4.0	.61	.30
JB_PA	223	8	25.57	7.6	.85	.41
JB_DEP	223	5	13.73	5.42	.82	.49
ITQ	223	5	13.45	3.84	.88	.62
PSYC_efficacy	223	6	26.65	4.19	.71	.37
PSYC_hope	223	6	27.37	4.77	.86	.50
PSYC_resilience	223	6	26.11	3.87	.68	.30
PSYC_optimism	223	6	23.89	4.0	.61	.23
EI_ER	223	5	17. 03	3.46	.73	.36
EI_ESA	223	4	13.1	2.51	.49	.20
EI_ESM	223	5	16.84	2.65	.31	.10
EI_EE	223	5	16.33	2.75	.37	.12
EI_ESC	223	4	13.64	2.63	.60	.29
EI_EAO	223	4	13.47	2.49	.44	.18
EI_EMO	223	4	13.41	2.41	.40	.15
EL_ED	223	6	19.58	4.13	.79	.39
EL_ERD	223	5	16.74	3.29	.79	.37
TL_II	223	8	35.73	7.76	.92	.60

A higher score for inter-item correlation can thus be regarded as a good score, since it will illustrate that these items are measuring the same construct to a certain degree.

TL_IS	223	4	17.51	3.9	.82	.54
TL_IM	223	4	18.0	4.21	.90	.69
TL_IC	223	4	17.59	4.31	.88	.65

WE = Work engagement; JB = Job burnout; ITQ = Intention to quit; PSYC = Psychological capital; EI = Emotional intelligence; EL = Emotional labour; TL = Transformational leader

Table 4.2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Internal Consistency Reliabilities of Scales

Scale	Sample size	Number of items	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha	Average inter-item correlation
WE	223	17	11.62	2.88	.94	.83
JB	223	22	8.94	2.14	.50	.30
ITQ	223	5	13.45	3.84	.88	.62
PSYC	223	24	17.34	2.26	.81	.53
EI	223	31	23.44	3.15	.86	.48
EL	223	11	6.61	1.18	.70	.54
TL	223	20	17.74	3.87	.96	.88

WE = Work engagement; JB = Job burnout; ITQ = Intention to quit; PSYC = Psychological capital; EI = Emotional intelligence; EL = Emotional labour; TL = Transformational leader

4.2.1.1 Work engagement

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .94, which indicates high internal consistency reliability. The UWES-17 scale consists of three subscales/dimensions, namely vigour, dedication and absorption. None of the individual items affected the coefficient negatively and therefore no items were deleted.

The internal consistency was supported by an average inter-item correlation of .83. The individual inter-item correlations ranged between .47 and .55. These results show that the UWES-17 measures what it is supposed to measure. The Cronbach's alphas of the subscales were also satisfactory as all three were above .70 (vigour = .85, dedication = .85, absorption = .84).

4.2.1.2 Job burnout

The Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS) has three sub-dimensions, namely emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment and depersonalisation (Bianchi, Truchot,

Laurent, Brisson, & Schonfeld, 2014; Utami & Wacana, 2013; Volpone, Perry, & Rubino, 2013). The Cronbach's alphas were satisfactory to a certain extent, since two of the three sub-dimensions were above .7 (personal accomplishment = .85, depersonalisation = .82). Emotional exhaustion was slightly below .70 (α = .61), but since it was very close to .70, emotional exhaustion can critically be assumed to be satisfactorily reliable as well. This indicates that the items did indeed measure the latent variable 'job burnout' satisfactorily. The Cronbach's alpha of burnout in total was not satisfactory, with a score of .50. This is an indication that, to some extent, burnout does not quite represent what the sub-dimensions were measuring. However, the average inter-item correlation score for burnout was satisfactory (AVE = .30), indicating that the sub-dimensions correlated with one another when measuring the same construct.

In total, the MBI-GS was found not to be the best measurement scale with regard to its internal consistency reliability; however, it was decided to keep the scale in the subsequent analyses based on the principle of research transparency and due to the fact that the participants had already completed the MBI-GS as part of the composite research questionnaire.

4.2.1.3 Intention to quit

The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-5) obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .88, which indicates high internal consistency reliability. The average inter-item correlation for the TIS-5 was found to be .62, which also is an indication of excellent reliability.

4.2.1.4 Psychological capital

The Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ) obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .81, which indicates high internal consistency reliability. The PCQ consists of four subscales, namely self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism. The self-efficacy subscale had one item that could marginally improve the coefficient upon deletion. The resilience subscale showed one poor item, and the optimism subscale showed two poor items. It was noted that the poor items in both the resilience and optimism subscales were reversed items. It was speculated that the reversed nature of these items caused participants some confusion. The deletion of the abovementioned items was not warranted, since they would only have improved the Cronbach's alpha coefficient marginally. However, two of the four subscales' Cronbach's alphas were above .70 (Efficacy = .71, Hope = .86), whereas the other two subscales were slightly below .70 (Resilience = .68, Optimism = .61). Once again, the same poor items

mentioned above showed lower inter-item correlations, ranging from .23 to .37. No items were deleted for the same reason as mentioned above.

The average inter-item correlation of the PCQ scale was .53, which indicates a high reliability. The overall Cronbach alpha was also satisfactory with a score of .81.

4.2.1.5 Emotional intelligence

The Genos Emotional Intelligence Inventory produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .86, which also indicates high internal consistency reliability. The scale consists of seven subscales, namely emotional reasoning (ER), emotional self-awareness (ESA), emotional self-management (ESM), emotional expression (EE), emotional self-control (ESC), emotional awareness of others (EAO), and emotional management of others (EMO). The Cronbach's alpha reliability scores of the sub-dimensions were not satisfactory, since six of the seven sub-dimensions scored below .70 (emotional self-awareness = .49, emotional self-management = .31, emotional expression = .37, emotional self-control = .60, emotional awareness of others = .44, emotional management of others = .40). It is quite problematic that only one sub-dimension could score above the critical value of .70 (emotional reasoning = .73). This indicates that the items did not measure their applicable 'emotional intelligence sub-dimension' latent variables satisfactorily. Most of these subscales showed poor items, which in some cases were reversed items. Once again, it was speculated that the reversed nature of those items caused participants some confusion. However, the deletion of the abovementioned items as not warranted, since they would only have improved the Cronbach's alpha coefficient marginally. Even though the Cronbach's alpha reliability scores of the sub-dimensions were not satisfactory, the overall emotional intelligence scale produced a high Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which indicates acceptable internal consistency reliability.

The average inter-item correlation for the total scale was .48, which indicates acceptable reliability. The individual inter-item correlations ranged between .15 and .36. These inter-item correlations were considered acceptable.

4.2.1.6 Emotional labour (i.e. emotional demands and emotion-rule dissonance)

The Emotional Labour scale obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .70, which indicates good internal consistency reliability. The emotional labour scale consisted of two sub-dimensions that also obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of above .70 (emotional demands = .79 and emotional-rule dissonance = .79). The average inter-item correlation for

the emotional labour scale was found to be .54, which indicates excellent reliability. The average inter-item correlation for the subscales emotional demands and emotion-rule dissonance were depicted as .39 and .37 respectively.

4.2.1.7 Transformational leadership

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .96, which indicates high consistency reliability. Furthermore, the MLQ consists of four sub-dimensions, namely idealised influence (II), intellectual stimulation (IS), inspirational motivation (IM) and intellectual consideration (IC). The internal consistency reliabilities of all four subscales were satisfactory, as their Cronbach's alphas ranged between .82 and .92. The average inter-item correlation for the MLQ was .88, which is an indication of excellent reliability.

4.2.1.8 Decision regarding the reliability of latent variables scales

The purpose of the foregoing item analysis was to evaluate the functioning of each of the latent variables and to assess the psychometric integrity of the indicator variables of the latent variables.

The results of the item analysis provided satisfactory evidence to support the inclusion of the items in the measurement instruments. Most of the items were found to be internally consistent and reliable at an acceptable level, as the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were above .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1999). The deletion of some of the poor individual items would only have improved the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of certain scales marginally. These possible marginal improvements did not warrant the deletion of these items and it was therefore decided to retain all of them. The average inter-item correlations of the scales ranged between .30 and .88. These results are acceptable.

It was concluded that the results of the item analysis were satisfactory and therefore the subsequent analyses were performed and are reported.

4.3 PARTIAL LEAST SQUARE (PLS) ANALYSIS

A two-step process is recommended when the PLS approach to structural equation modelling is utilised (Chin, 1998). The first step is to evaluate the measurement model, followed by the evaluation of the structural model. The structural model refers to the structural component of the model. The main purpose of the measurement model evaluation is to determine the measurement quality of the construct that will be used in the evaluation of the inner model. After the reliability of each latent variable scale has been established, path coefficients are

examined to determine the strength and significance of the hypothesised relationships. In other words, once it has been shown that the measurement model fits, the significance of the paths between the variables can be tested and evaluated in order to confirm the fit of the structural model.

4.3.1 Evaluation and interpretation of the measurement model

The purpose of the reliability analysis is to examine the measurement model fit, as well as the reliability of the latent variable scales. The composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE) were used for the evaluation and interpretation of the reliabilities of each latent variable. The composite reliability value measures whether the reliability of the latent variable scales is satisfactory. When the composite reliability value is equal to or higher than .70, it is deemed satisfactory. All the latent variables scores of reliability were found to be > .70 and can thus be concluded to be satisfactory. The AVE score can be compared to the other reliability scores, although the AVE is a stricter measure of reliability. The AVE value measures the amount of variance in the indicator variables, explained by common factors. A score of above .50 indicates that the indicator variables do indeed measure the relevant construct (Pennstate, 2015). The AVE values for *most* of the latent variables were equal or above .50, which indicates that these constructs explained more than 50% of the variance in the items. Emotional demands (EL_ED) and emotion-rule dissonance (EL_ERD) were the only two variables with an AVE score of below .50, however these two scores were close to .50 EL_ED = .47; EL_ERD = .48). The reliability statistics can be found in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Reliability Statistics of the PLS Model

Scale	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Composite reliability
WE	.88	.96
JB	.51	.75
ITQ	.50	.92
PSYC	.65	.88
EI	.55	.90
EL_ED	.47	.82
EL_ERD	.48	.82
TL	.91	.98

WE = Work engagement; JB = Job burnout; ITQ = Intention to quit; PSYC = Psychological capital; EI = Emotional intelligence; EL = Emotional labour, TL = Transformational leader

In order to establish the *construct validity*, additional analyses were performed. Construct validity refers to the degree to which a scale measures what it is supposed to measure. The *discriminant validity* of each scale was also tested using the Fornel Laker criteria. It is evident that all the scales passed the test and therefore it can be concluded that all the constructs are unique and not highly correlated with the other constructs.

4.3.1.1 Outer loadings

The last evaluation of the reliability of the items included in the latent variable scales was done by conducting a PLS bootstrap analysis. Bootstrapping was done to determine whether the item loadings were significant or not. Evaluation of the factor loadings was necessary for this specific purpose. The factor loadings were evaluated by looking at whether zero falls within the 95% confidence interval. If zero does fall within the interval, the factor loadings would not be statistically significant; if zero does not fall within this interval, the factor loadings are significant.

Table 4.4 illustrates the strength of the relationships between latent variables and the relevant items measuring them in the survey. It can be concluded that the paths between items and their relevant latent variables work engagement, job burnout, intention to quit, psychological capital, emotional intelligence, emotion-rule dissonance and transformational labour were all statistically significant. These results are indicated with zero not falling within the 95% confidence interval. This confirms the reliability of each item included in the latent variable scales.

However, the paths between emotional demands and its four items (sub-dimensions) were found to be insignificant, indicating a problem with the measurement of the scale. Moreover, even though the composite reliability of the emotional demands (EL_ED) scale was deemed satisfactory, the AVE was below .50, which could question the reliability of the scale to some extent. The researcher had to bear these findings in mind when inferences were made about the results that included the emotional demands construct.

The abovementioned findings are all outlined in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Outer Loadings

Latent variables	Path	Original sample	95% confidence interval (lower)	95% confidence interval (upper)	Significant
Work engagement	Vigour → Work engagement	.941	.912	.96	Significant
	Dedication → Work engagement	.936	.915	.943	Significant
	Absorption → Work engagement	.95	.932	.965	Significant
Job burnout	EE → Job burnout	.82	.677	.914	Significant
	PA → Job burnout	.487	.108	.677	Significant
	DE → Job burnout	.786	.605	.895	Significant
Intention to quit	ITQ_1 → Intention to quit	.782	.695	.843	Significant
	ITQ_2 → Intention to quit	.855	.807	.892	Significant
	ITQ_3 → Intention to quit	.855	.801	.896	Significant
	ITQ_4 → Intention to quit	.852	.788	.896	Significant
	ITQ_5→ Intention to quit	.797	.719	.855	Significant
Psychological capital	Efficacy → Psychological capital	.783	.704	.843	Significant
	Hope → Psychological capital	.887	.858	.911	Significant
	Resilience →Psychological capital	.775	.701	.834	Significant
	Optimism →Psychological capital	.755	.65	.829	Significant
Emotional intelligence	ER → Emotional intelligence	.478	.319	.606	Significant
	ESA → Emotional intelligence	.749	.673	.81	Significant
	ESM → Emotional intelligence	.756	.663	.826	Significant
	EE → Emotional intelligence	.738	.619	.821	Significant
	ESC → Emotional intelligence	.791	.724	.845	Significant

	EAO → Emotional intelligence	.824	.782	.865	Significant
	EMO → Emotional intelligence	.818	.75	.866	Significant
Emotional demands	ED1 → Emotional demands	.788	-.005	.87	Not significant
	ED2 → Emotional demands	.758	-.026	.864	Not significant
	ED3 → Emotional demands	.666	-.276	.823	Not significant
	ED4 → Emotional demands	.482	-.71	.924	Not significant
	ED5 → Emotional demands	.746	-.059	.868	Not significant
Emotion rule dissonance	ERD1 → Emotion rule dissonance	.655	.265	.778	Significant
	ERD2 → Emotion rule dissonance	.688	.428	.869	Significant
	ERD3 → Emotion rule dissonance	.815	.561	.893	Significant
	ERD4 → Emotion rule dissonance	.635	.069	.798	Significant
	ERD5 → Emotion rule dissonance	.623	.072	.782	Significant
Transformational leadership	II → Transformational leadership	.953	.936	.965	Significant
	IS → Transformational leadership	.936	.906	.956	Significant
	IM →Transformational leadership	.945	.923	.961	Significant
	IC →Transformational leadership	.936	.906	.956	Significant

EE = Emotional Exhaustion; PA = Personal Accomplishment; DA = Depersonalisation; ITQ = Intention to quit; ER = Emotional Reasoning; ESA = Emotional Self-awareness; ESM = Emotional Self-image; EE = Emotional Expression; ESC = Emotional Self-control; EAO = Emotional Awareness of Others; EMO = Emotional Management of Others; ED = Emotional Demands; ERD = Emotion-rule Dissonance; II = Idealised Influence; IS = Intellectual Stimulation; IM = Inspirational Motivation; IC = Intellectual Consideration

Consequently, the results indicate that all the latent variable scales, except the Emotional Demands scale, were deemed statistically significant. This confirms the reliability of the item included in these latent variable scales.

4.3.2 Evaluation and interpretation of the structural model

The structural model was analysed to determine the quality of the relationships between the latent variables that were utilised in the survey. The objective of the PLS structural model

analysis was to determine to what extent the latent variables were related to one another. The relationship and influence of the exogenous variables on the endogenous variables and the endogenous variables on one another were determined. The structural model is also known as the 'inner model', since it determines factors inside the structural model (Kidd, 2015). The analysis of the structural model include testing for multicollinearity, evaluation of the R squares, as well as evaluating and interpreting the main effects, along with the moderating effects.

4.3.2.1 Multicollinearity

When regression analysis is being done, many predictor variables are present and one must assume that all the predictors are uncorrelated with each other. Sometimes the predictors are correlated too highly with one another, and this results in unstable regressions determined by estimated coefficients. The researcher tested for multicollinearity using a variance inflation factor (VIF). Variance inflation factors measure how much the variance of the estimated regression coefficients are inflated as compared to when the predictor variables are not linearly related. This information is used to describe how much multicollinearity (correlation between predictors) exists in a regression analysis. Multicollinearity is problematic because it can increase the variance of the regression coefficients, making them unstable and difficult to interpret.

Various recommendations for acceptable levels of VIF have been published in the literature. Perhaps most commonly, a value of 10 has been recommended as the maximum level of VIF (Pennstate, 2015). The VIF recommendation of 10 corresponds to the tolerance recommendation of .10 (i.e., 1 / .10 = 10). However, a recommended maximum VIF value of 5 and even 4 can be found in the literature (Pennstate, 2015). It would appear that researchers can use whichever criterion they wish to help serve their own purposes. A maximum VIF value of 5 or higher was considered as problematic within the present study (Kidd, 2015). However, it was found that all the scores were below 5 and therefore no indication of multicollinearity problems was found.

4.3.2.2 Evaluation and interpretation of the R square

The R square value determines how much variance in the endogenous variables is explained by the exogenous variables. Table 4.5 illustrates the R square scores for the endogenous variables.

Table 4.5

R Squares Scores for the Endogenous Variables

	R square
Burnout	.718
Intention to quit	.157
Transformational leadership	.293
Work engagement	.628

The burnout score was .72 and the work engagement score was .63. This indicates that 72% of the variance in burnout can be explained by the effect of exogenous variables. Moreover, 63% of the variance in work engagement can be explained by the effect of exogenous variables. The intention to quit score of .16 and transformational leadership score of .29 are relatively lower than the score of burnout and work engagement. This indicates that almost 16% of the variance in intention to quit can be explained by the effect of exogenous variables, whereas 29% of the variance in transformational leadership can be explained by the effect of exogenous variables. The low scores are an indication that there are possible other variables that could have had an impact on the endogenous variables (e.g. on the variable intention to quit) that are not measured in this study.

4.3.2.3 Evaluation and interpretation of the main effects

It is important to note that the purpose of PLS path modelling is not to test a theory, but to facilitate prediction (Henseler et al., 2009). After the reliability of each latent variable scale was established, path coefficients were examined to determine the strength and significance of the hypothesised relationships. In order to determine significance between variables, the bootstrapping method was used (Davison, Hinkley, & Young, 2003). According to this method, when zero falls in the confidence interval, the corresponding coefficient will be seen as not significant, and vice versa.

In Table 4.6 it is indicated whether the path coefficients were significant or not. In order to determine the strength and significance of the hypothesised paths as proposed in the structural model (Figure 3.1), path coefficients were investigated by determining whether zero fell within the 95% confidence interval, as explained earlier. The significance of the path coefficients was investigated and information on whether the hypothesised paths were significant was provided for each path.

Table 4.6

Path Coefficients between Variables

Path	Path coefficient	95% confidence interval (lower)	95% confidence interval (upper)	Description
H1: JB – WE	-.17	-.32	.025	Not significant
H2: WE – ITQ	-.40	-.52	-.27	Significant
H3: ED – JB	.20	-.02	.34	Not significant
H4: ERD – JB	.13	.02	.25	Significant
H5: TL – WE	.23	.101	.33	Significant
H6: EI – TL	.27	.112	.42	Significant
H7: PSYC – TL	.34	.16	.50	Significant
H8: EI – WE	-.10	-.252	.04	Not significant
H9: PSYC – WE	.49	.36	.64	Significant

WE = Work engagement; JB = Job burnout; ITQ = Intention to quit; PSYC = Psychological capital; EI = Emotional intelligence; ED = Emotional demands; ERD = Emotional rule dissonance; EL = Emotional labour; TL = Transformational leader

Hypothesis 1: Job burnout (η2) has a significant negative effect on work engagement (η1) among call centre employees.

The hypothesised negative relationship between work engagement and job burnout was found *not to be significant* (PLS path coefficient = -.17), with zero falling within the 95% confidence interval. Even though the results proved that the relationship between work engagement and job burnout was negative, the relationship between the two constructs was insignificant. Consequently, the latter part of the findings is in contrast with some of the existing research on the relationship between job burnout and work engagement (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli et al., 2002) whereas it agrees with other research findings (Makikangas et al., 2012). This finding implies that call centre agents suffering from job burnout will not necessarily be less engaged in their work. Work engagement therefore can be considered as a separate construct that is not dependent on/related to job burnout and that will not be influenced negatively by a high level of job burnout. It can be concluded that the call centre agents experiencing job burnout symptoms might still display or experience a sense of engagement.

Hypothesis 2: Work engagement (η1) has a significant negative effect on intention to quit (η3) among call centre employees.

The hypothesised negative relationship between work engagement and intention to quit was found *to be significant*. The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.40, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. This corroborated previous research endeavours that studied this relationship (e.g. Bakker et al., 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). According to the results of this study, it is evident that call centre employees who are engaged in their work will not experience intention to quit. Not only has this finding contributed to research on work engagement and intention to quit, but it has also contributed to the research done on the relationship between engagement and intention to quit specifically within the call centre environment. Therefore, as employees employed by call centres become more engaged in their work, they will be less prone to actively seek alternative employment opportunities. These employees' sense of commitment toward and investment in their current organisation discourage the development of turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 3: Emotional demands ($\xi 2$) have a significant positive effect on job burnout ($\eta 2$) among call centre employees.

The hypothesised positive relationship between emotional demands and job burnout was found *not to be significant* (PLS path coefficient = .20), with zero falling within the 95% confidence interval. This result is in contrast to previous research endeavours that studied this relationship (e.g. Ashill et al., 2009). Consequently, the emotionally demanding work experienced within the call centre environment will not necessarily lead to an increase in the level of burnout experienced by call centre agents.

This insignificant finding might be due to the fact that the paths between the emotional demands scale and its subscales/items were found to be insignificant. The existence of this small relationship between the items and the measurement scale potentially could fail to provide an accurate indication of the emotional demands experienced by the call centre agents. The low AVE score of the emotional demands scale should also be taken into consideration.

Hypothesis 4: Emotion-rule dissonance ($\xi 3$) has a significant positive effect on job burnout ($\eta 2$) among call centre employees.

The hypothesised positive relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout was found to be *statistically significant* (PLS path coefficient = .13), with zero not falling within the 95% confidence interval. This confirms previous research endeavours that studied this

relationship (e.g. Hulsheger & Schewe, 2011; Xanthopoulou et al., 2013). Emotion-rule dissonance can be considered as a hindrance stressor that displays a negative relationship with job-related well-being and a positive relationship with personal ill-being. Therefore, as job burnout is strongly related to health outcomes, there is a strong relationship between the emotion-rule dissonance that a call centre employee experiences and his/her level of job burnout. The higher the level of emotion-rule dissonance and strain call centre employees experience, the higher the possibility that they will suffer from burnout.

Hypothesis 5: Transformational leadership (η4) has a significant positive effect on work engagement (η1) among call centre employees.

The hypothesised positive relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement was found to be *statistically significant* (PLS path coefficient = .23), with zero not falling within the 95% confidence interval. These findings support the findings of Zhu et al. (2009), who found that transformational leadership was positively related to higher levels of followers' psychological safety, psychological meaningfulness and psychological availability, which would be expected to be positively related to higher levels of engagement. The call centre employees proved to have higher levels of work engagement when they *perceived* their leaders to take care of their basic and higher order needs. The findings of Tims et al. (2012) further corroborate the findings that call centre employees receiving support, coaching and inspiration from their leader will experience their work as more challenging, and would more likely be engaged in their tasks.

Hypothesis 6: The emotional intelligence (ξ1) of the subordinates will have a significant positive effect on transformational leadership (η4).

The hypothesised positive relationship between the emotional intelligence of the subordinates and transformational leadership was found to be *statistically significant* (PLS path coefficient = .27), with zero not falling within the 95% confidence interval. This corroborates previous research endeavours that studied this relationship (e.g. Cavazotte et al., 2012; Farahani et al., 2011). The leadership style alone cannot be responsible for subordinate performance, as the employees' perceptions of their leader's management style and their feelings about their ability to achieve organisational goals are just as important (Cavazotte et al., 2012). It thus can be concluded that managers engaging in a transformational leadership style will be more effective in their approach to and way of managing subordinates who have a higher level of emotional intelligence than those with a lower level. The level of emotional intelligence

exhibited by the call centre agents therefore does have an impact on the effectiveness of the leader's management style. Those with a high level of emotional intelligence will *perceive* their leaders in a positive light and consequently will influence the relationship between these two variables positively.

Hypothesis 7: The subordinates' psychological capital (ξ4) has a significant positive effect on transformational leadership (η4).

The hypothesised positive relationship between subordinates' psychological capital and transformational leadership was found to be *statistically significant* (PLS path coefficient = .34), with zero not falling within the 95% confidence interval. This verifies Zhu et al.'s (2009) support for linking followers' psychological capital to the effectiveness of their leader. Call centre agents with a high level of psychological capital will respond more positively to a leader who is trying to inspire such followers to heightened levels of performance.

By taking into consideration the findings on hypothesis 6 and hypothesis 7, it can be concluded that it is not only important to have leaders with a good management style (i.e. ideally transformational leaders), but also to focus on subordinates' levels of emotional intelligence and psychological capital, either through recruitment and/or training and development. The higher the levels of the subordinates' emotional intelligence and psychological capital, the better their perception of their leader and the greater the impact of the leader's management style on his/her subordinates.

Furthermore, as not all employees are equally affected by a transformational leader, it may also be advisable to take into account individual characteristics of the subordinate, such as professional ambition. These individual characteristics may determine whether the transformational leader's behaviour is perceived as a resource by the followers, which in turn may account for different reactions to a transformational leader.

Hypothesis 8: Emotional intelligence (ξ1) has a positive effect on work engagement (η1) among call centre employees.

The hypothesised positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement was found *not to be statistically significant* (PLS path coefficient = -.10), with zero falling within the 95% confidence interval. This differs from previous research and propositions, such as those of Duran et al. (2012), who found a significant relationship between emotional

intelligence and work engagement. Consequently, the findings imply that call centre agents who have a high emotional intelligence are not necessarily prone to be more engaged in their work compared to employees with lower levels of emotional intelligence.

The possibility exists that other, unknown variables moderate or mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement, and therefore no direct relationship was to be found.

Hypothesis 9: Psychological capital (ξ4) has a positive effect on work engagement (η1) among call centre employees.

The hypothesised positive relationship between psychological capital and work engagement was found to be *statistically significant* (PLS path coefficient = .49), with zero not falling within the 95% confidence interval. This corroborates the work of Leiter and Bakker (2010), who stated that psychological capital capacities create conditions necessary for flow, where individuals become absorbed in their work. Taken together, the synergetic potential of the efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience making up psychological capital would seem to be a powerful predictor of the interrelated components of vigour, dedication and absorption associated with call centre agents' work engagement. In addition, it implies that call centre employees who have a high level of self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience will more likely be happy and engaged in their job.

4.3.2.4 Evaluating and interpreting the proposed moderating hypotheses

Two approaches were followed to test for the *moderating* effects. Initially, the R^2 change test for interaction was utilised by using three variables (independent, moderator, dependent) each time to test whether the R^2 will increase significantly when the interaction between the independent and the moderator variables (independent*moderator) is included. In Table 4.7, the R^2 change and p-values are provided in order to evaluate whether moderating effects exist between the different paths. It is important to note that $p < .05$ is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level.

Secondly, path coefficients were again utilised to determine the strengths, significance and direction of the hypothesised moderating effects in the structural model. The significance of a hypothesised path is determined by whether zero is present between the lower and upper bootstrapping values. The analysis was done using a 95% confidence interval, similar to what

was explained earlier. The data utilised to determine the relationships of hypotheses is presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.7

R^2 Change and P-values for the Moderating Effects

Path	R^2 change	F- to remove	P-value
H10: ERD*TL – JB	-.002	.038	.845
H11: ED*TL – JB	-.11	2.706	.101
H12: ERD*EI – JB	-.0004	.009	.924
H13: ED*EI – JB	-.002	.039	.844
H14: ERD*PSYC – JB	-.003	.092	.762
H15: ED*PSYC – JB	-.0004	.012	.913
H16: TL*ERD – WE	-.0106	3.323	.97
H17: TL*ED – WE	-.0084	2.631	.106
H18: EI*ERD – WE	-.0053	1.539	.216
H19: EI*ED – WE	-.0069	2.013	.157
H20: PSYC*ERD – WE	-.0055	2.41	.121
H21: PSYC*ED – WE	-.0001	.004	.948

WE = Work engagement; JB = Job burnout; ITQ = Intention to quit; PSYC = Psychological capital; EI = Emotional intelligence; ED = Emotional demands; ERD = Emotional rule dissonance; EL = Emotional labour; TL = Transformational leader

Table 4.8

Moderating Path Coefficients

Path	Path coefficient	95% confidence interval (lower)	95% confidence interval (upper)	Description
H10: ERD*TL – JB	-.07	-.22	.15	Not significant
H11: ED*TL – JB	.11	-.08	.31	Not significant
H12: ERD*EI – JB	-.01	-.34	.25	Not significant
H13: ED*EI – JB	-.23	-.48	.442	Not significant
H14: ERD*PSYC – JB	-.04	-.31	.30	Not significant
H15: ED*PSYC – JB	-.01	-.47	.10	Not significant
H16: TL*ERD – WE	-.03	-.19	.13	Not significant
H17: TL*ED – WE	-.15	-.29	.07	Not significant

H18: EI*ERD – WE	-.21	-.58	.22	Not significant
H19: EI*ED – WE	-.02	-.36	.24	Not significant
H20: PSYC*ERD – WE	.11	-.23	.41	Not significant
H21: PSYC*ED – WE	.12	-.24	.54	Not significant

WE = Work engagement; JB = Job burnout; ITQ = Intention to quit; PSYC = Psychological capital; EI = Emotional intelligence; ED = Emotional demands; ERD = Emotional rule dissonance; EL = Emotional labour; TL = Transformational leader

Hypothesis 10: Transformational leadership (η4) has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) and job burnout (η2).

The p-value of transformational leadership as a moderator of the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout was found to be higher than .05 (p = .845). A p-value higher than .05 means that transformational leadership does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout.

When this moderating effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout was tested further in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the same finding was found. The hypothesised moderating effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout again was found to be *not statistically significant.* The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.07, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 11: Transformational leadership (η4) has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between emotional demands (ξ2) and job burnout (η2).

The p-value of transformational leadership as a moderator of the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout was found to be higher than .05 (p = -.11). A p-value higher than .05 means that transformational leadership does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout.

When this moderating effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout was tested in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the finding was confirmed. The hypothesised moderating effect of transformational leadership on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout again was found to be *not statistically significant*. The PLS path coefficient was equal to .11, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 12: Emotional intelligence (ξ1) has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) and job burnout (η2).

The p-value of emotional intelligence as a moderator of the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout was found to be higher than .05 (p = .924). A p-value higher than .05 means that emotional intelligence does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout.

When this moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout was tested further in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the same finding was found. The hypothesised moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout again was found to be *not statistically significant*. The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.01, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 13: Emotional intelligence (ξ1) has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between emotional demands (ξ2) and job burnout (η2).

The p-value of emotional intelligence as a moderator of the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout was found to be higher than .05 (p = .844). A p-value higher than .05 means that emotional intelligence does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout.

When this moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout was tested further in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the same finding

was confirmed. The hypothesised moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout again was found to be *not statistically significant*. The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.23, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 14: Psychological capital (ξ4) has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) and job burnout (η2).

The p-value of psychological capital as a moderator of the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout was found to be higher than .05 (p = .762). A p-value higher than .05 means that psychological capital does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout.

When this moderating effect of psychological capital on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout was tested in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the finding was confirmed. The hypothesised moderating effect of psychological capital on the relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout again was found to be *not statistically significant*. The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.04, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 15: Psychological capital (ξ4) has a significant negative moderating effect on the relationship between emotional demands (ξ2) and job burnout (η2).

The p-value of psychological capital as a moderator of the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout was found to be higher than .05 (p = .913). A p-value higher than .05 means that psychological capital does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout.

When this moderating effect of psychological capital on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout was tested in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the finding was confirmed. The hypothesised moderating effect of psychological capital on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout again was found to be *not statistically*

significant. The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.01, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypotheses 10 to 15 were all found to contradict the findings of previous research (Bakker et al., 2014), which states that job resources and personal resources buffer the impact of job demands on strain (i.e. job burnout). Consequently, the relationship between the emotional labour (i.e. emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands) experienced in the call centre and that of job burnout is not weaker for those employees enjoying a high degree of job resources (i.e. transformational leadership) and who exhibit a high level of personal resources (i.e. emotional intelligence and psychological capital). The first interaction/moderating (buffering) effect, as explained in Chapter 2, therefore seems not to have any impact on the relationship between emotional demands and job burnout. These non-significant paths might be as a result of many reasons. The small sample size on which the study was conducted could potentially have influenced the results. The non-significant paths might also be due to the inclusion of the emotional demands scale, which was deemed to be problematic, as explained earlier. Moreover, few, if any, studies were found to be conducted on the *specific* variables included in the study and their moderating effects. Consequently, more research needs to be done on the specific job resources and personal resources and their buffering/moderating effect on the specific relationship between emotional labour and job burnout.

Hypothesis 16: Emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) has a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between transformational leadership (η4) and work engagement (η1).

The p-value of emotion-rule dissonance as a moderator of the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement was found to be higher than .05 (p = .97). A p-value higher than .05 means that emotion-rule dissonance does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement.

When this moderating effect of emotion-rule dissonance on the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement was tested in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the same finding was found. The hypothesised moderating effect of emotion-rule dissonance on the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement again was

found to be *not statistically significant*. The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.03, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 17: Emotional demands (ξ2) have a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between transformational leadership (η4) and work engagement (η1).

The p-value of emotional demands as a moderator of the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement was found to be higher than .05 (p = .106). A p-value higher than .05 means that emotional demands do not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement.

When this moderating effect of emotional demands on the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement was tested further in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the finding was confirmed. The hypothesised moderating effect of emotional demands on the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement again was found to be *not statistically significant*. The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.15, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 18: Emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) has a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence (ξ1) and work engagement (η1).

The p-value of emotion-rule dissonance as a moderator of the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement was found to be higher than .05 (p = .216). A p-value higher than .05 means that emotion-rule dissonance does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement.

When this moderating effect of emotion-rule dissonance on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement was tested in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the finding was confirmed. The hypothesised moderating effect of emotion-rule dissonance on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement again was found to be *not statistically significant*. The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.21, with zero not falling

in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 19: Emotional demands (ξ2) have a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence (ξ1) and work engagement (η1).

The p-value of emotional demands as a moderator of the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement was found to be higher than .05 (p = .157). A p-value higher than .05 means that emotional demands do not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement.

When this moderating effect of emotional demands on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement was tested in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the finding was confirmed. The hypothesised moderating effect of emotional demands on the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement again was found to be *not statistically significant.* The PLS path coefficient was equal to -.02, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 20: Emotion-rule dissonance (ξ3) has a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between psychological capital (ξ4) and work engagement (η1).

The p-value of emotion-rule dissonance as a moderator of the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement was found to be higher than .05 (p = .121). A p-value higher than .05 means that emotion-rule dissonance does not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement.

When this moderating effect of emotion-rule dissonance on the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement was tested in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the finding was confirmed. The hypothesised moderating effect of emotion-rule dissonance on the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement again was found to be *not statistically significant*. The PLS path coefficient was equal to .11, with zero not falling in

the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypothesis 21: Emotional demands (ξ2) have a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between psychological capital (ξ4) and work engagement (η1).

The p-value of emotional demands as a moderator of the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement was found to be higher than .05 (p = .948). A p-value higher than .05 means that emotional demands do not have a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement.

When this moderating effect of emotional demands on the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement was tested in terms of PLS bootstrapping, the finding was confirmed. The hypothesised moderating effect of emotional demands on the relationship between psychological capital and work engagement again was found to be *not statistically significant.* The PLS path coefficient was equal to .12, with zero not falling in the 95% confidence interval. The exact information on the confidence of the lower and upper intervals is provided in Table 4.8.

Hypotheses 16 to 21 tested the second interaction effect, as explained in Chapter 2, in which job demands amplify the impact of job resources and personal resources on work engagement. These six hypotheses are also found to be in contrast to previous research findings (Bakker et al., 2014). These research findings state that job resources and personal resources become salient and have the strongest positive impact on work engagement when job demands are high. This interaction effect is not found within the present study, however, as all the hypotheses related to the second moderating effect were insignificant. This confirms that, when the call centre agents are confronted with challenging job demands (i.e. emotional labour), the existing job resources (i.e. transformational leadership) and personal resources (i.e. emotional intelligence and psychological capital) will not become valuable. Consequently, it can be assumed that the emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands experienced by the employees will not amplify the impact that job resources and employees' personal resources will have on their level of work engagement. The same reason as explained in relation to the first interaction effect might apply to these non-significant paths. The small sample size on which the study was conducted potentially could have influenced

the results. The non-significant paths might also be due to the inclusion of the emotional demands scale, which was deemed to be problematic, as explained earlier. Moreover, very little research is available on the *specific* job and personal resources and their moderating effects as explained by the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). Therefore, more research needs to be done on the specific job demands and their moderating effects on the relationship between the particular job resources and personal resources and employees' levels of work engagement.

4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to report on and discuss the findings. The measurement model was validated by conducting item analyses on each subscale of each measurement in order to establish the reliability of the items included in the questionnaires. PLS was used to further investigate the reliability of the items of each scale used to measure the latent variables. Thereafter, the structural model was analysed to determine the quality of the relationships between the latent variables that were utilised in the survey. Lastly, the final scores and hypothesised relationships (of the main and moderating effects) were interpreted.

The paths between emotional demands and its four sub-dimensions were found to be insignificant, indicating a problem with the scale as a measure. Also, even though the composite reliability of the emotional demands scale was deemed satisfactory, the AVE was below .50, which could question the reliability of the scale to some extent. However, it is important to note that no individual items were removed after the item analysis was conducted, and no subscales or items were removed subsequent to CFA. This was done with the purpose of interpreting the results exactly as they were gathered by the research questionnaire. The researcher did not want to influence the results, i.e. by deleting items or improving measurement model fit.

From the 21 hypotheses formulated in the study, six were found to be significant. It is noteworthy, however, that 12 of the non-significant paths were related to the moderating effects. Hypotheses 1, 3 and 8 were also found to be not significant. These non-significant paths might be due to many reasons. However, hypotheses 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 were all found to be statistically significant and therefore supported JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014) which postulates that job demands are generally the most important predictors of job burnout, whereas job resources and personal resources are generally the most important

predictors of work engagement. Also, call centre agents experiencing a high level of work engagement will be less inclined to leave the organisation.

Chapter 5 will outline the managerial implications of the study to assist South African industrial psychologists, line managers and the specific call centre company to address problems related to the research findings. The limitations of the study will be discussed together with recommendations for future research endeavours.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 contextualised the study and gave an overview of the research-initiating question and the research objectives. Chapter 2 provided an in-depth literature review of the relevant variables of the study, together with hypotheses that were derived from the literature. Chapter 3 explained the methodology, sample and statistical analyses that were used in the study. Chapter 4 discussed the results, participant scores and outcomes of the hypotheses. This final chapter outlines managerial implications to assist South African industrial psychologists, line managers and the specific call centre company in addressing problems related to the research findings discussed in Chapter 4. The results will be extended to the basic JD-R theory and will evaluate to what degree this study's findings agree with the theory. Furthermore, the limitations of the study will be put forward, together with recommendations for future research endeavours.

Throughout the study it became evident that work engagement and job burnout are the result of intricate interactions. The combination of job resources, personal resources and job demands has to operate in such a way as to provide employees with the opportunity to experience engagement, rather than suffer from burnout. The JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008) distinctly explains the different interactions between job resources and demands and the associated outcomes. Low job demands paired with low job resources are likely to result in call centre agents experiencing *apathy*, whereas high job demands associated with low resources will possibly result in *burnout*, while the opposite outcome will be *boredom*. Engagement therefore is the result of both high job demand and resources. This is related to the motivational Goal-Setting Theory of Latham and Locke (2006), which states that the more difficult the set goal is, the higher the motivation and related effort to attain the goal. Consequently, as the job demands are high within a call centre environment, the agents need to draw on their available job resources and personal resources in order to effectively deal with and face the challenges set by the high job demands (i.e. emotional demands and emotion-rule dissonance).

The presence of this high emotional labour could fuel the call centre agents' motivation to succeed in their job and would be seen as a challenge, rather than a threat. However, it is vital to realise that coping resources should be available for employees to successfully address demands. If this is not the case, challenges become threats and the strain resulting from the demands could develop into burnout (Bakker, 2011). The employees' work engagement therefore is the product of high job demands associated with the availability of many job resources, and the ability of employees to draw from their personal resources.

Consequently, the present study argues for understanding the importance of individual characteristics as well as the existence of job resources in order to deal with the high job demands within a call centre environment. This realisation calls for the development of preventative and survival[13] interventions. Knowledge of the functioning of personal resources and job resources in the JD-R model will enable HR managers to develop interventions that can foster the growth of these resources in the pursuit of optimising engagement and helping call centre agents deal with the existing job demands. The call centre agents will then be able to cope better with the existing job demands and will less likely suffer from burnout. Overall, an increase in work engagement and a decrease in the employees' level of burnout will lead to a decrease in their intention to leave the organisation.

5.2 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Research, especially quantitative research, in which relationships between variables are shown to be significant, is of much value for industrial psychologists and managers within workplaces. The PLS path analysis provided valuable information regarding the amount of variance accounted for by the total model. The results of the PLS path analyses showed that the model accounted for almost 72% of the variance observed in burnout and nearly 63% of the variance observed in work engagement. It therefore is clear that the developed model provides valuable findings for practicality within the workplace. Work engagement and job burnout are individual and organisational outcomes of the interaction between the variables in the JD-R model, namely job resources, job demands and personal resources (Bakker, 2011). It therefore would be advantageous for organisations to focus managerial efforts and interventions on the latter variables with the aim to decrease employees' levels of burnout and to foster work engagement, which in turn will lead to a decrease in employees' intention

[13] Survival interventions can be regarded as interventions implemented in order to help the employees cope/manage and deal with the existing job demands within the call centre environment.

to quit (as the relationship between work engagement and intention to quit was found to be statistically significant, with a PLS path coefficient of -.40). The interventions that were found to be most effective were those that combined specific measures at the organisational and individual levels (Bakker et al., 2014). Interventions at the organisational level focus on groups of employees, whereas individual approaches focus on the specific needs and problems particular employees may have (Bakker et al., 2014). Interventions at both of these levels are discussed by focusing specifically on increasing job resources, fostering personal resources, and reducing job demands.

The proposed implications initially are structured as general implications that call centres, managers and industrial psychologists can implement to address typical problems associated with call centres. In the second instance, the implications address specific interventions geared towards the problems that emerged from the statistical results of the call centre sample in the present study.

5.2.1 General implications for call centres

Due to the high levels of job burnout and emotional labour in call centres, management generally could focus on how call centres can reduce the level of job burnout and emotional labour experienced by current employees and consider how to equip staff members to enable them to manage their job stress more effectively. To prevent burnout and the intention of call centre agents to quit, as well as contribute to their work engagement, it is recommended that organisations manage job demands and attempt to improve the lack of organisational support (i.e. job resources) within the organisation. Appropriate coping skills (i.e. personal resources) are another important area of intervention that can be taken into consideration by organisations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

It is suggested that employers and management must ensure that continuous job resources are available to their employees and that they support their employees with personal resources through training sessions. Additionally, employees should be presented with an opportunity to perform work that requires thought and independent judgement. Generally, when a degree of independence and freedom of choice is allowed in the performance of their tasks, employees will consider their work as meaningful (Graziano & Hoyle, 2009). Allowing employees to participate in appropriate decision making will enrich the employees' feeling of membership and contribute to the meaningfulness component of sense of coherence. Similarly, management should implement interventions to assist call centre agents in dealing

with the emotions that they experience, as well as their handling of conflicts (Hansez & Chmiel, 2010).

Call centre managers often underestimate the impact that good supervision, regular and valid feedback and supportive relationships can have on employees. Managers who regularly are present in the service transaction environment have the ability to produce valid and regular feedback to their employees and should do so regularly. Arranging monthly feedback sessions where positive and negative feedback are given to each employee will ensure a workforce that will attempt to improve their performance feedback each month (Sawyerr et al., 2009). Managers who are more visible in the workplace can achieve good supervision, which can be implemented by guidelines for managers to spend a certain amount of time visible to their employees (Sawyerr et al., 2009).

The implementation of this suggested type of system should result in relevant feedback sessions during a manager's supervision of his/her employees. If employees perceive that their manager is alert while supervising, they will strive to be more productive (Visser & Rothman, 2014). Furthermore, concerning management, organisations need to promote transformational leadership, as this leadership style will lead to an increase in the employees' psychological capital, which in turn will result in an increase in work engagement and a decrease in turnover intentions.

These interventions set out general and broad guidelines that the researcher could consider when addressing the specific interventions geared towards the problems within the call centre sample.

5.2.2 Implications aimed specifically at the results of the present study

This section will discuss the interventions that will be practical and feasible for the two call centre branches that were studied. As Bakker et al. (2014) state, job burnout and work engagement are not redundant concepts. Whereas job demands are the most important antecedents of job burnout, job resources are the most important antecedents of work engagement. Moreover, whereas job burnout has a negative impact on employee well-being and organisational performance, work engagement is a desirable state with positive consequences. Therefore, it is necessary that interventions implemented in the call centres should aim to prevent burnout and foster work engagement, leading to a decrease in the employees' intention to quit. Bakker et al. (2014) furthermore state that the most effective

interventions are those that combine specific measures on individual as well as organisational levels.

5.2.2.1 Organisational level interventions

Interventions at the organisational level focus on groups of employees (Bakker et al., 2014). These interventions consist of *training programmes* as well as *redesigning* the specific job within each department in the call centre. Consistent with JD-R theory, possible interventions proposed specifically by the current study are to reduce job demands, foster personal resources and increase job resources within the call centre.

5.2.2.1.1 Reducing job demands (i.e. emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands) through job redesign

As high job demands cost considerable effort, it is important to examine possible ways to reduce the job demands in the call centre. These hindrance demands are stressful and are viewed by workers as unnecessarily thwarting personal growth and goal attainment (Callaghan & Thompson, 2002).

The hypothesised positive relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout was found to be statistically significant (PLS path coefficient = .13). This research finding indicates a strong positive relationship between emotion-rule dissonance and job burnout. On the other hand, the hypothesised positive relationship between emotional demands and job burnout was found to be not statistically significant. As discussed, emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands are sub-dimensions of emotional labour. Emotional labour is an example of a job demand for call centre agents. Consequently, it is important to focus on emotional labour as a whole by implementing interventions in order for the call centre agents to deal better with these hindrance demands. It is not possible to eliminate the emotional labour that the employees need to deal with, as it will always be part of any call centre environment. It rather is important to introduce interventions within the organisation that will help the call centre agents cope better with the emotion-rule dissonance and emotional demands they experience. Possible interventions to reduce hindrance demands include (a) the implementation of fair procedures in times of organisational change and (b) teaching teams and departments to combine challenging demands with sufficient job resources. In line with these interventions, Bakker et al. (2014) claim that there are two ways to intervene to reduce job demands or increase job resources to reduce negative symptoms resulting from job demands. These interventions can be summarised broadly as job redesign and job crafting.

Job crafting, however, is an individual-level intervention and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Job redesign is an intervention from an organisational level with the objective to change employee well-being by utilising job demands and job resources. Bakker and Demerouti (2014, p. 18) describe job design as "how jobs, tasks and roles are structured, enacted, and modified, as well as the impact of these structures, enactments, and modifications on individual, group, and organisational outcomes".

Job redesign is a top-down process in which organisations or managers change elements of the job tasks, responsibilities, roles, conditions, etc. with the aim of optimising the demands-resources balance (Bakker et al., 2014). Examples of job redesign would be to increase support and provide supervisory coaching and performance feedback (job resource); and to assign additional job responsibilities (challenging job demand) in order for the call centre agents to better deal/cope with the emotional demands. In each case, the structure and/or content of the job are redesigned. However, the second interaction/moderating results of the present study showed that job demands would not amplify the impact of job resources and personal resources on work engagement. Therefore, this specific call centre should rather focus on developing their managers' leadership style (a job resource)[14] than on assigning additional challenging job responsibilities in order for the call centre agents to manage the existing job demands.

Moreover, managers within each department in the call centre could also conduct an organisational survey to determine which job resources and demands employees would like to see addressed with the aim of improving engagement and decreasing job burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). It is crucial to start the intervention with the assessment of the most important job demands and job resources that need attention (Bakker et al., 2014) within the specific call centre environment.

5.2.2.1.2 Increasing job resources (i.e. transformational leadership) through training

Job resources such as social support and performance feedback can be optimised by redesigning the work environment or through training (Bakker et al., 2014). The hypothesised positive relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement was found to be statistically significant (PLS path coefficient = .23). This research finding provides

[14] The hypothesised positive relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement was found to be **statistically significant** (PLS path coefficient = .23).

evidence of a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement, and indicates the importance of exploring the development of transformational leadership.

Bass and Avolio (1997) suggest that transformational leadership could be enhanced by both training (i.e. participation in a workshop) and counselling (i.e. feedback of subordinate ratings). Specifically, in both the workshop and the feedback sessions the leaders are encouraged to set specific, and achievable (Locke & Latham, 1990) goals for displaying particular leadership behaviours. The sessions would focus on small behavioural changes and give emphasis to the implementation of only those changes that will be constant over time. The leaders within each department within the call centre would then be encouraged to create a list of five such specific goals to put into practice. According to Wong and Law (2002), based on the subordinates' perceptions, individuals will be seen as exhibiting leadership that is more transformational within three to four months because of these goals that have been implemented.

About one month prior to each leader-training session, the subordinates' ratings of their leader's transformational leadership style should be collected, as well as, where appropriate, outcomes thought to be associated with transformational leadership, e.g. affective commitment. These data must then be used to provide feedback to the leaders on their current use of a transformational leadership style and in order to provide baseline data from which to evaluate change (Jackson et al., 1986).

Related data should then be collected again approximately six months after the workshop/initial feedback session. In a second feedback session, leaders will be presented with the information, which will allow them to evaluate the effectiveness of their change in behaviour. The use of a second feedback session has at least three functions:

1. The second feedback session establishes the expectation for change. Participants in the training are made aware of the fact that changes are expected and that they will be measured.
2. The second feedback session also serves as a "booster" session, reinforcing the changes that leaders implement in order to enhance a transformational leadership style.
3. The second round of data collection offers evaluative data from which both the training participants and the trainers can evaluate the effectiveness of the programme.

This approach to training transformational leaders is also consistent with the propositions of social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), which marry rigorous conceptual knowledge with opportunities to practise and apply observable behaviour (Walumbwa & Hartnell, 2011). Walumbwa and Hartnell (2011) suggest that this approach to training comprises four essential elements: (1) the presentation of behavioural principles; (2) the demonstration of the principles; (3) opportunities to practise the principles; and (4) feedback on performance. These elements are found in both the formal workshop presentation as well as in the use of a follow-up session to assess change.

Moreover, Gooty et al. (2009) suggest that leaders may need to pay closer attention to the different needs and preferences of each follower, as was originally suggested by Bass (1985) in terms of the individualised consideration component of transformational leadership. In addition, organisational leaders may need to think through how each of them views their subordinates' attributes and how those perceptions may shape how they go about motiving their subordinates to perform. Adding to this, Gooty et al. (2009) suggest that it is important that the followers also perceive themselves to have these characteristics.

Additionally, the hypothesised positive relationship between the subordinates' psychological capital and transformational leadership was also found to be statistically significant (PLS path coefficient = .34). Call centre agents with a high level of psychological capital will respond more positively to a leader who is trying to inspire such followers to heightened levels of performance. Consequently, leaders may need to ensure that their followers have positive beliefs about themselves (Barling et al., 2000). The call centre may need to pay more attention to followership training as well as to leadership training. The managers of each department within the call centre need to be trained to be more transformational across various levels in order to enhance their abilities in leading their teams and followers. However, positive followership training and/or interventions can be conducted to coincide with leadership interventions, as followers are in most cases the final implementers of leaders' and organisations' strategies. Moreover, focusing training on making sure the call centre agents and their leaders have similar perceptions of the agents' characteristics (for example their level of psychological capital) may serve to improve the effectiveness of leaders developing followers into leaders.

Together with the abovementioned, another practical implication may relate to a Golem effect, which indicates that, when leaders rate their subordinates' characteristics lower than

followers perceive themselves, the followers' work engagement will be significantly lower (Barling et al., 2000). To make sure that followers are able to realise their greatest potential, the leader needs to understand how followers perceive themselves and figure out whether there is a difference between his/her perception and that of his/her followers regarding follower characteristics. For leaders, it is likely safer to assume a higher expectation of followers, which could lead to a more positive Pygmalion effect,[15] rather than having a lower expectation of followers, which could lead to the Golem effect. Generally speaking, followers probably have more reserve potential that goes untapped of which their leaders may be unaware, so assuming the best versus the worst seems like a practical strategy for leaders to follow (Farahani, Taghodosi, & Behboudi, 2011).

5.2.2.1.3 Fostering personal resources (i.e. psychological capital) through training

The hypothesised positive relationship between subordinates' psychological capital and transformational leadership was found to be statistically significant (PLS path coefficient = .34), as was the hypothesised positive relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement (PLS path coefficient = .23). Consequently, these findings indicate the importance of exploring the development of employees' psychological capital through training interventions.

Training interventions are aimed at the organisational level with the purpose to develop personal resources. Training and development are one of the cornerstones of human resource management (HRM) functions. In the South African context, organisations that meet specific requirements have to be able to prove that they invest sufficiently in the training and development of employees. The aim of training is to develop employees' skills, knowledge and problem-solving abilities. Bakker et al. (2014) put forward that training could also be targeted at developing employees' personal resources.

Luthans et al. (2007) developed micro-interventions targeted at developing psychological capital elements, namely hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience. They found that the interventions not only improved the employees' psychological capital, but also had a positive impact on financial metrics, and had a high return on investment. Organisations similarly can invest in psychological capital training at an organisational level.

The positive organisational behaviour (POB) literature focuses more on positive, individual, micro-level states and their development as related to impact on employee performance

[15] A Pygmalion effect is when higher expectations lead to an increase in performance (Barling et al., 2000).

outcomes (Luthans & Avolio, 2014). Indeed, POB is the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace (Luthans & Jensen, 2002). These state-like (versus dispositional, fixed and trait-like) psychological capacities that are open to development comprise self-efficacy, optimism, resilience and hope. In combination, these concepts constitute the higher-order, multi-dimensional construct of psychological capital.

Psychological capital is seen as a malleable, state-like construct that thus can be developed (Luthans et al., 2007). There are specific guidelines and numerous successful applications in the positive psychology literature for enhancing hope, optimism, resiliency and self-efficacy. These micro-interventions will subsequently be discussed briefly:

- **Hope**: The hope construct consists of goal and pathway elements. The intervention targeting hope is normally one to three hours long and starts by asking participants to develop personally valued goals. It is emphasised that the participants need to set (a) measurable goals and (b) sub-goals in order to track small 'wins' on the way to achieving bigger goals. After the completion of this phase, participants are asked to develop as many pathways as necessary to reach the set goals. This process is known as pathway generation. When the participants have brainstormed some ideas, they are all divided into small group in which they help each other generate additional paths to the set goals, as well as identify possible obstacles related to each suggested path. Lastly, the participants have to list pathways based on the required resources and possible obstacles, and then discard unrealistic pathways. In the end, the call centre agents are taught to take ownership of personally valued goals and to generate contingency plans, even in the face of obstacles (Luthans et al., 2007).

- **Self-efficacy**: Self-efficacy training is based on the work of Bandura (1977), and is the most accepted and extensive intervention in training in the four constructs. This intervention draws from the taxonomy of the sources of efficacy, namely (1) task mastery, (2) modelling or vicarious learning, (3) social persuasion and positive feedback, and (4) psychological and/or physiological arousal. This intervention builds on the prior hope intervention and the goals that were set. Exercises focus on modelling accomplishments and success, group role playing, producing positive emotions, building participant confidence to produce and implement goals, etc. The

researcher suggests that the managers of each department within the call centre should also be involved in such sessions to learn how to facilitate the development of the self-efficacy of their subordinates (Luthans et al., 2007).

- **Resilience:** The intervention targeting resilience focuses on framing personal setbacks. Participants are asked to recognise recent personal setbacks within their work environment and then to reflect on their immediate reactions. The participants are led through a process of ideal resiliency, in which they detangle factors that are in their control, out of their control, as well as possible actions that could have been taken. The purpose of this intervention is to reinforce learned cognitive processes that focus on framing setbacks and developing plans in order to bounce back from these obstacles. Participants develop strategies to improve their personal assets and to develop perceptions of influence through cognitive, emotional and behavioural exercises (Luthans et al., 2007).

- **Optimism:** Optimism interventions focus mostly on elements addressed in the hope, self-efficacy and resilience training. Facilitators further can prepare a 'worst-case scenario' exercise in which participants are asked to identify the worst possible outcome of a situation. Participants have to develop plans to take proactive action in the case that the worst-case scenario unfolds. The facilitator focuses on counteracting pessimism and supports the development of realistic, yet optimistic, expectations about the future and reinforces positive self-talk (Luthans et al., 2007).

Due to the nature of the call centre environment (continuous flow of incoming calls and a strict focus on performance), it must be taken into account that it might become problematic to implement time-consuming interventions. Therefore, alternative, shorter training interventions could be considered. Luthans, Avey and Patera (2008) recommend web-based training for the development of psychological capital. They promote the ease of implementation, delivery, reduced cost and accessibility of web-based training interventions that take the format of two 45-minute online sessions.

Another short training intervention that could be focused on is known as the Psychological Capital Intervention (PCI), developed by Luthans et al., (2007). The PCI consists of a two- to three-hour training intervention, comprising a series of exercises and group discussions designed to influence the call centre agents' levels of self-efficacy, hope, resilience and

optimism. For example, in order to improve and develop hope, the participants practise setting work-related goals that are stimulating, challenging and personally valuable, as well as creating pathways to their goals and recognising obstacles for which to plan. As soon as the participants have finished this exercise individually, they receive recommendations from the rest of the group about supplementary pathways to goals and obstacles to expect. Empirical evidence suggests that short training interventions such as the PCI have been used successfully to increase employees' levels of psychological capital (Luthans & Youssef, 2010).

5.2.2.1.4 Fostering personal resources (i.e. emotional intelligence) through training

Research has shown that personal resources can be taught (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Therefore, as the results of the current study indicate that the call centre agents lack important resources, the organisation may decide to arrange on-the-job training. In this training, the call centre agents receive examples of how to develop their emotional intelligence in their daily routine, and acquire new competencies that will help them execute their daily tasks.

The hypothesised positive relationship between the emotional intelligence of the subordinates and work engagement was found to be not statistically significant. However, the hypothesised positive relationship between the emotional intelligence of the subordinates and transformational leadership was found to be statistically significant (PLS path coefficient = .27). This finding indicates the importance of exploring the development of the emotional intelligence of the call centre agents in order to improve the effectiveness of the impact of the manager's leadership style.

The aims of incorporating emotional intelligence training into the development programme of call centre agents should be to improve the understanding of oneself and others and to develop improved skills when addressing psychological needs.

Research in the field of neuroscience (Davidson, Jackson, & Kalin, 2000) supports the proposition that emotional intelligence can be improved through targeted training techniques. The process of improvement prescribed by Boyatzis (2007) is what he describes as intentional change. Intentional change is a preferred change in an aspect of who you really are (i.e. the Real) or who you want to be (i.e. the Ideal), or both. Boyatzis (2007) developed a model consisting of five stages of discovery, namely:

1. Discovering who you want to be – your ideal self.

2. Discovering who you are, where your ideal self and real self are similar, and identifying the gaps existing between the two.
3. Establishing a learning agenda to close the gaps.
4. Developing new behaviours, thoughts and feelings that create new neural pathways, leading to mastery.
5. Creating trusting relationships that help and encourage each of the stages.

Moreover, Caruso and Salovey (2004) suggest a pragmatic approach to becoming an emotionally intelligent individual. The researcher argues that the training could make the call centre agents aware of two ways of developing the ability to manage one's emotions, namely writing and exercising. It is suggested that the act of writing is not what is important, but rather the element within the writing. Caruso and Salovey (2004) offer several suggestions for what is called "emotionally healthful writing". These elements include:

- Using positive words frequently.
- Moderating the use of negative words.
- Using causal words and phrases such as "led me" or "caused me to".
- Using insightful words and phrases such as "realise" and "understand".

Writing includes writing to a friend or using a journal to capture emotions and to explore one's deepest emotions and thoughts. *Exercise*, on the other hand, is another way to better manage emotions. It has been shown to be a key element in managing moods. Caruso and Salovey (2004) suggest that one does not need to run or cycle for miles. Simply taking a short walk to collect one's thoughts might be enough to help manage emotions. Another technique that can be taught to the employees through the training session is to stay open to their emotions. Wolpe (1958) developed a technique known as systematic desensitisation as a method for staying open to emotions. The process involves the following steps:

1. The call centre agents need to determine the emotions causing them the most trouble.
2. They then have to define a list of situation that will create these specific emotions.
3. The situations must be ranked from the most to least emotionally intense.
4. The employees then need to learn how to relax in these situations (i.e. exercising, writing).
5. Lastly, they have to create a pleasant and calming mood and try to relax.

Research in the field of neuroscience indicates that the emotional centres within the brain have a plasticity that can be developed. The training methods described by Boyatzis (2007) and Caruso and Salovey (2004) provide guidance to process improvement experts seeking to improve emotional intelligence.

The call centre therefore can incorporate these approaches in its training programme to foster skills such self-awareness, self-regulation and social skills. The environment within which learning should take place needs to be addressed to provide a trusting and supportive setting within which the call centre agents feel safe to explore their feelings and voice their opinions (Caruso & Salovey, 2004).

5.2.2.2 Individual-level interventions

Bakker et al. (2014) state that, through individual approaches, organisations can attend to the specific needs and problems employees may have. Individual employees may face hindrance demands because of certain life events. Similarly, individual employees may lack certain job or personal resources because of changes in the organisation or in their personal lives. Organisations could use internet versions of JD-R questionnaires with tailored feedback to inform employees about their most important job demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). This information could be the starting point of a change process that is guided by a personal coach. Other possible interventions include: (a) *job crafting training*, in which employees learn how to proactively change their own work environment; (b) *strength-based training*, in which employees learn to set personal goals and use their strengths at work in new ways, and (c) *recovery training*, in which employees learn which activities best help them to recover from their work-related efforts. Recovery training might also include relaxation techniques or mindfulness.

Consistent with JD-R theory, possible interventions are proposed specifically for the current study by looking specifically at fostering personal resources and job resources.

5.2.2.2.1 Fostering personal resources through strength-based approaches

Research has shown that personal resources such as optimism, resilience and self-efficacy can be taught (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Thus, when an organisational assessment indicates that large groups of employees lack important personal resources, organisations may decide to arrange on-the-job-training. In this training, employees receive examples of how to develop their personal resources in their daily work routines, and they acquire new competencies that help them execute their daily job tasks (Luthans et al., 2007).

Strength-based interventions are situated on the individual level and are also aimed at developing the personal resources of employees (Bakker et al., 2014). Individual strengths can be defined as positive traits that are reflected in feelings, thoughts and behaviours (Bakker et al., 2014). In comparison to personal resources training on an organisational level, strength-based interventions would take a more personalised, coaching format that usually would take place between either a manager and a subordinate, or a coach and an employee. This one-on-one approach takes an individual on a development journey on which he/she starts out by identifying his/her individual strengths. The individual is guided over a certain period to explore different ways in which his/her strengths can be developed and applied within the work environment (Bakker et al., 2014). This type of intervention will lead the individual on a path of personal development and engagement with their work.

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is growing in popularity as a strength-based approach to organisation development and transformative whole-system change. AI invites people, often in large-group summit format, to appreciate and inquire into each other's stories about what gives life or energy to their shared experience in order to tap into the natural capacity for cooperation and change that is in every social system. These energy-given themes and practices then form the foundation from which to collectively envision, design and move towards a share wished-for future, without being told or asked to do so (Verleysen, Lambrechts, & Van Acker, 2015).

Verleysen, Lambrechts and Van Acker (2015) found that AI practices could affect the experience and development of individuals' psychological capital through satisfying their basic psychological needs as a mediating variable. The results of the present study show that the hypothesised positive relationship between psychological capital and work engagement was statistically significant (PLS path coefficient = .49), and therefore the call centre can consider using AI practices in order to increase/foster employees' levels of psychological capital. As people come together through the elevation of inquiry, the emotions experienced are often amplified positive emotions, which tend to broaden and build. Verleysen et al. (2015) state that positive emotions help create a storehouse or build-up of resources over time. These resources might be higher quality relationships or an accumulation of things such as positive anticipation, confidence and sense of efficacy.

Although there is not one best way to do AI, many AI practitioners use the 4-D cycle, published in the late 1990s (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999), to guide their change interventions. The 4-D cycle consists out of four sets, which includes discovery, dream, design and destiny. In the *discovery phase*, the call centre agents would engage in a rigorous exploration of experiences regarding the best of the past in order to identify and understand common energy-giving factors of success. As a first step, people would be invited to interview each other in pairs with a focus on discovering and valuing what exactly gives life in stories of high-point experiences. These discoveries are then shared in small groups of pairs in order to bring to the surface the most common life-giving factors. The stage is then set for the *dream phase* ("what might be?"), in which the employees would envision together new possibilities for the most common preferred future. In the *design phase* ("what should be?"), the call centre agents would co-design their common wished-for future in small groups. In doing so, they begin to shift their focus from energy-giving factors and dreams to concrete actions and activities. This phase usually results in actionable "provocative propositions" (i.e. challenging and stretching statements provoking the imagination to consider the organisation's positive core) or tangible prototypes of what should be in the future. In the *destiny phase*, the groups self-organise and begin to set up activities and projects in order to realise the preferred future. Through improvisation and learning, they create value and aim to build an appreciative learning system (Verleysen et al., 2015).

The call centre agents' therefore can participate in AI as AI unlocks and develops the human potential of the members of the organisation in terms of heightening their confidence, hope, optimism and resilience (i.e. their overall psychological capital). This process happens particularly by satisfying the innate needs to be competent and to be able to learn with and from others. AI thus is an alternative way to increase the call centre agents' psychological capital as well as their basic needs satisfaction, both of which are conditions for co-creating new possibilities and effective systemic change.

However, granted the fact that this type of intervention would be beneficial to any employee, it could be costly and time intensive. This type of JD-R intervention therefore should be carefully considered before implemented within the entire organisation.. Strength-based interventions are also seen as a form of leadership development (Avey, 2014) and therefore could be valuable at only a managerial and/or executive level.

5.2.2.2.2 Fostering job resources through job crafting

Job-crafting interventions, in contrast to traditional job redesign, are situated on the individual level and are initiated by the employees themselves. Employees choose to proactively change their job resources, job demands and work environment (Bakker et al., 2014). Job crafting is the process in which employees actively change the design of their jobs by choosing tasks, negotiating different and more preferred job content, and assigning more meaning to the jobs or tasks they do. The ideal would be if organisations stimulate job-crafting behaviour. The call centres focused on in the study could be proactive and demonstrate to the call centre agents how it is possible to craft certain aspects of their job.

Applied correctly, job crafting will be beneficial to the call centre as well as to the individual. It therefore is important for the call centre to educate its employees on how they can craft their jobs. Firstly, managers can arrange workshops where exercises are offered in order to demonstrate how job crafting works and what exactly it entails. The call centre agents would then receive the opportunity to practise these behaviours during the workshop. Secondly, managers can help the employees to develop their own personalised crafting plan. This personalised crafting plan can be used to set job crafting goals and managers can conceptualise these as a coaching process in which they can track employees' progress and offer feedback and suggestions. Goal setting and practising would take place over a period of numerous weeks. These crafting goals set by the call centre agents would focus specifically on (1) increasing job resources, (2) increasing challenging job demands and (3) decreasing troublesome job demands. Lastly, the managers could organise reflective meetings in which the agents can discuss successes, challenges and problems related to their personalised crafting plan. This type of process will not only inform the call centre agents, but also the managers of each department, on how they can apply job crafting behaviours within their managerial roles. Moreover, the managers should recognise and reward exceptional job crafting behaviour to stimulate crafting in the call centre. The managers should also take reasonable actions to monitor the call centre agents' ability to deal with demands, especially during performance appraisal discussions, in order to ensure that their work remains meaningful and challenging instead of becoming overwhelming.

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite the contributions it has made, this study has several limitations. Importantly, however, these limitations do not significantly undermine the results discussed in Chapter 4.

However, these limitations provide guidelines for aspects on which future research endeavours can improve.

To begin with, although the sample of 223 call centre employees was satisfactory, a larger sample size would have made the results and study more credible. Due to the nature of the call centre environment (continuous flow of incoming calls and a strict focus on performance), it was taken into account that it probably was difficult for the respondents to find time to complete the questionnaire. The limited size of the sample may cause some concern when referring to generalisability, as well as to the validity of the inferences made about call centre agents as a population. The sample size and the complexity of the structural model also limit the use of LISREL to test the structural model. In addition, a possible explanation for the absence of practically significant relationships between the various constructs, which proved to have practically significant relationships in some other studies, could be due to the small sample size. It therefore is recommended that future studies attempt to procure a larger sample from a variety of call centres.

Moreover, as this study focused only on two call centres – in Bellville and Century City, Cape Town – the results cannot be generalised to the larger population. A stratified random sample from a number of call centres around South Africa that is more representative and can be generalised should be used in future studies. It would also be worthwhile to test this study's model on different service industries, for example waiters, nurses or flight attendants, rather than only on call centre employees. Also, the current study focused only on outbound departments within the call centres, as their turnover rates were the highest. It therefore is recommended that future studies should focus on both outbound and inbound call centre departments.

Secondly, the study relied on self-report data that was collected by means of a paper-copy questionnaire. Method bias (i.e. impression management) unfortunately is a weakness associated with self-report questionnaires. Participants are able, to some extent, to respond in a way that would create a more positive and favourable impression of themselves. Correspondingly, the exclusive use of self-report questionnaires can artificially inflate the correlations between predictors (Avey, 2014). It would be advisable for future researchers to consider using objective measures for latent variables. However, objective measures have other disadvantages, such as observational and egocentric bias, which could influence the validity and reliability of the measures.

The confidentiality aspect of self-administered web-based surveys signifies another limitation of this study. Even though individual participants were assured of confidentiality, it is possible that they mistrusted the confidentiality clause in the informed consent document. As a result, this could have had a negative impact on the authenticity of their responses.

Thirdly, most of the reported PLS path analysis R square values were satisfactorily high (ranging from .157 to .718). Nevertheless, it is plausible that there are important predictors of intention to quit,[16] work engagement and job burnout that were not included in this research study. These variables might yield more statistically significant results. There are so many other factors potentially influencing the endogenous variables included in the study, such as environmental and personal factors (Bakker et al., 2011). To circumvent the third limitation of this study, future endeavours could explore the possibility of including other variables in the JD-R model that makes theoretical sense in explaining work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit. The present study's model therefore could be expanded in future studies.

Furthermore, some of the questionnaires contain items that are reverse-scored. Reversed items are known to influence scale reliability (Gorgens-Eckermans & Herbert, 2013). In this study, the reversed items were found to yield low inter-item correlations. Arguably, the language proficiency of the participants could play a role in their understanding of these reversed items. To circumvent the fourth limitation of this study, future endeavours could explore the possibility of rewriting these items in a positive way that would avoid reversed scoring and then test the reliability of these items before commencing with data collection.

Moreover, the questionnaire was provided only in English. Some of the Afrikaans- and Xhosa-speaking employees found some of the items difficult to understand, especially words such as "immersed" and "resilient" in the UWES-17. Certain items also were confusing in the way they were stated. These items can be regarded as items that could have had an influence on the overall results of the study. Although the scales showed good reliability, further development and validation of the scales measuring these constructs could be considered within a South African context, especially on the emotional demands (EL_ED) scale.

Lastly, this study took a 'snapshot' of the studied phenomenon (cross-sectional research study), which prevents the researcher from drawing causal conclusions (Taris & Kompier, 2006). To enhance the accuracy and consistency of the reported research findings, it might be

[16] Especially intention to quit, as it showed weak statistical results, with a R square value of .157.

feasible to conduct a longitudinal study with multiple time waves or a diary design. Not only would this enable the researcher to draw more definitive causal conclusions, but it also would be possible to identify recurring behavioural patterns among employees employed by call centres, as well as changes over time.

5.4 DISCUSSION

Generally, the primary objectives of this study were to test the comprehensive structural JD-R model of the proposed relationships between the constructs, and to determine the level of job demands, job resources, personal resources, job burnout, work engagement and intention to quit of a sample of call centre agents. Moreover, the researcher aimed to highlight the results and managerial implications of the research findings and to recommend practical interventions to the participated call centres that could increase/decrease the respective constructs with the aim to increase employees' work engagement and decrease their job burnout and intention to quit. Reflecting on the objectives, the researcher concludes that all of the research objectives of this study were met.

The research-initiating question asked, "Why is there variance in work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit amongst the employees in call centres?"

From the 21 hypotheses formulated in the study, six were found to be significant. It is noteworthy, however, that 12 of the non-significant paths were related to the moderating effects. These non-significant paths might be due to many reasons. The small sample size on which the study was conducted could potentially have influenced the results. The non-significant paths might also be due to the inclusion of the emotional demands scale, which was deemed to be problematic, as explained earlier. Moreover, few, if any, studies were found to be conducted on the *specific* variables and their moderating effects. Consequently, more research needs to be done on the moderating effects of the specific job resources, personal resources and job demands.

Moreover, hypotheses 1, 3 and 8 were found to be not significant. Hypothesis 1 examined the negative relationship between job burnout and work engagement and results show that job burnout has no significant effect on employees' level of work engagement. As discussed earlier, different views exist on whether burnout and work engagement represent independent or related constructs. The study's finding, however, agrees with previous research (e.g. Maslach & Leiter, 1997) stating that work engagement is a distinct construct, independent of job burnout.

Hypothesis 3 suggested a positive relationship between emotional demands and job burnout. However, it was found that emotional demands had no significant effect on the call centre agents' level of burnout. This finding therefore is in contrast with previous research that studied this relationship (e.g. Ashill et al., 2009) and might once again point to the emotional demands scale that has been red-flagged.

Lastly, hypothesis 8 proposed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement, but results showed statistical insignificance. This finding differs from previous research (Duran et al., 2012) which found a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement. The possibility exists that other, unknown variables moderate or mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement, and therefore no direct relationship could be detected. More research needs to be conducted on this specific relationship.

Hypotheses 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 were all found to be statistically significant and therefore supported JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). This implies that the participating (and other) call centres need to put interventions in place in order to cope with the high job demands present in their environment. Management should take cognizance of the functioning of personal resources and job resources explored in the study, which will enable them to develop interventions that can foster the enhancement of these resources in the pursuit of optimising engagement and helping the call centre agents to deal with their existing job demands.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

By testing the JD-R model in its entirety, and by exploring additional paths in the model, this study has made a contribution to the JD-R theory. The study also has contributed to the understanding of work engagement, job burnout and intention to quit among call centre agents in the Western Cape, South Africa. The reported research findings illustrate the impact that job demands, job resources and personal resources have on work engagement, burnout and intention to quit. Moreover, these findings provide insight into how industrial psychologists, managers and the call centre company could address problems related to the variables included in the study.

In conclusion, this chapter provided potential managerial interventions to address problems that became evident from the results. The interventions included a combination of specific

measures on individual as well as organisational levels. Finally, the limitations of the study were discussed and recommendations for future research were provided.

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